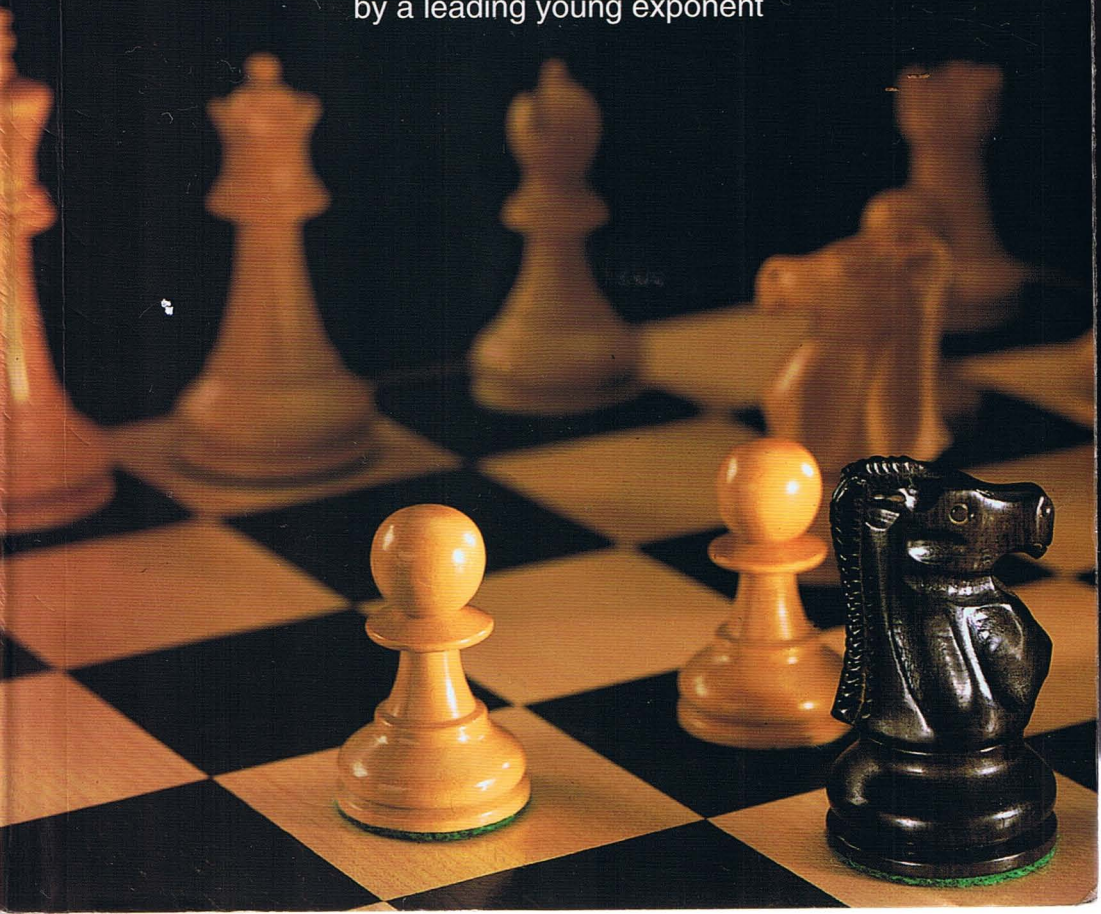


GAMBIT

Understanding the Grünfeld

Jonathan Rowson

An absorbing explanation of a fighting opening
by a leading young exponent





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Best regards!!
Saludos!

Caissa Lovers

Understanding the Grünfeld

Jonathan Rowson

GAMBIT

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Dedication

To my mother, who showed me that we are greater than our circumstances.

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Chess Director: GM John Nunn

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
tt	team tournament
Wch	world championship
Ech	European championship
Wcht	World Team Championship
ECC	European Clubs Cup
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
mem	memorial event
rp	rapidplay game
corr	correspondence game
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
1/2-1/2	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(n)	nth match game
(D)	see next diagram

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| <i>New in Chess Yearbooks 37-47</i> | <i>Scottish Chess</i> |
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Introduction

“*The Psychic task that a person can and must set for himself is not to feel secure but to be able to tolerate insecurity.*” – Erich Fromm

He lit his cigarette before popping the question, for he knew the answer would take some time.

I was interested of course, but I had never done this sort of thing before. The thought of such exposure made me laugh. There might be “repercussions”, I was told.

“Constraints” and “Deadlines”.

Possibly even a lack of fresh air.

The opportunity cost was huge.

Why me? Why now?

No good reason.

I told him I’d call him.

Then hesitated.

Why not me? Why not now?

No good reason.

I asked him to call me.

He called me. I concurred with his requests.

Then it was sent. So I signed it, and sent it back.

Now what do I do?

Don’t worry.

It’s been done.

There were breaks, and fresh air was never a problem.

The only snag was the purpose.

What’s the point in writing a book? Why am I writing this book?

So you can read it. Why are you reading it?

Well that’s your business! Which, of course, is also mine.

Scottish IM Craig Pritchett asks “Who would wish to write an openings book today! No sooner is even the best researched book out on the market than it is overtaken by many new ideas in the fast moving game of modern chess.” I read these words in the July 1995 issue of the *Scottish Chess* magazine and they played on my mind. This book will be published in 1999 when things are moving even faster. How much will be transitory? How much will stand the Test of Time?

My remit was simply this: write approximately 176 pages explaining the Grünfeld.

No target audience in particular, not necessarily from Black’s point of view, a repertoire or a survey. Precisely how to explain the Grünfeld was up to me. Further pointers were to come. GM John Emms, who had long since finished his cigarette, assured me that Gambit was aware that my chess annotations tended to be quite “wordy” and that this was a good thing because the chess book market was crying out for someone to “Explain the Grünfeld”. The normal level at which repertoire books are pitched is somewhere around 1600-2000 Elo, but they suspected that I would be naturally inclined to pitch it at a slightly higher level, and this was OK. I knew I wouldn’t have time to write much until late summer and this allowed some time for ideas to form and fester.

When I was younger, I learned a great deal from *Mastering the King’s Indian Defence* by Bellin and Ponzetto (1990). Beneath the title of the book we learn that we are supposed to master the opening “With the read and play method” which sounded shockingly like the method of all other chess books. However, this book, and the entire *Mastering* series, was rather different from most opening books in that there were lots of diagrams, lengthy explanations and very little systematic theory. Initially I thought I would present the Grünfeld in a very similar manner and this was reinforced by a conversation I had with a friend and former club-mate, John Clifford, rated around 1800, from Aberdeen.

“What are you doing this summer?”, he asked.

“Lots of things, but mainly I’m writing a book.”

“Oh, what about?”

“The Grünfeld, but with the emphasis on understanding. I have no intention of writing a theoretical manual.”

“Good”, he said, “I have no intention of reading one!”

At this point the task seemed uncomplicated, but as I thought of all the different lines, structures and ideas, certain difficulties arose. The first is that Grünfeld structures are much more variable, I think, than in the King’s Indian, the Modern Benoni or the French and so explaining typical strategic ideas would be difficult and I imagined that my explanations might become dangerously vague. The other problem was that the Grünfeld has a reputation for being enormously theoretical in nature. I thank FM Alan Norris for drawing my attention to Dvoretsky’s comments on the matter in *Opening Preparation*: “In openings like the Grünfeld ... White has an extremely wide choice; he is the one who determines the opening formation, and Black has to be prepared for everything. You can only play such lines with Black if you have a good memory.” If I had read this before signing the contract it may have stung, but having thought about the matter considerably I don’t think it’s true.

There is definitely a sense in which many chess-players want to be ‘spoon-fed’ by their authors and guided through the maze of competing lines. There is also a sense in which they want to know what’s going on conceptually because very few people think of themselves as having good memories! Many would argue that there is no such thing as a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ memory but rather those that are relatively ‘developed’ or ‘undeveloped’. I think this is an important point, but for now there is a more pressing question: can you confidently play the Grünfeld without excessive reliance on your memory?

Yes! As long as you understand the reasoning behind what you are trying to ‘remember’. As any good teacher knows, there is no problem ‘remembering’ if you genuinely understand. In many of the lines I have presented here, the analysis of opening variations runs fairly deep, but in almost all cases what looks like ‘theory’ to some, is only there as a reinforcement to help you understand why certain paths make better sense of the features of the position than others. In the 8 ♖b1 line for example, there is no problem with a club player with a ‘bad memory’ taking on board my main suggestion of ... ♖xa2 and ... ♗g4 without ‘remembering’ what follows. I have sought to explain the bulk of the ‘theory’ in conceptual terms and so hopefully the reader will understand what he is trying to achieve without feeling completely at sea just because he knows that there have been games played before from this position, which he hasn’t managed to ‘remember’. My point is that you don’t need to ‘remember’ – that is grappling for a security you will never find. I hope you will try to understand, however, so that you can confidently tolerate the insecurity which is ever-more acute as information’s swelling persistently presses against us.

The final format of the book is a bit of a ‘Random monkey’ (see Chapter 5) in that it doesn’t seem to follow any particular formalistic model. I decided on the chapter break-down quite early and I have aimed for the book to seem more fluid than compartmentalized because I think this is more akin to the way chess is played and also relates better to the way I think opening theory should be understood: as the application of associated ideas. Aristotle observed that you should not attempt to impose more exactitude on a study than the matter permits. Likewise, you should not strive to give easy versions of ideas that are inherently difficult. The best that the reader can hope for is that the difficulties are intrinsic to the subject matter, and not generated by the author’s style. I hope that players of all strengths with an interest in the Grünfeld will find something of interest to them and of course this involves making some parts boring to some and unfathomable to others. In any case, I believe the book contains all that a player needs to know to play the Grünfeld confidently, with or without prior knowledge of the opening.

Former US President Woodrow Wilson famously said that he used not only all the brains he had, but also all that he could borrow. I have ‘borrowed’ extensively

and I hope that my lenders will see some of the fruits of their lending in the book that follows. I thank:

Jon Speelman for telling me of the Hydra, and letting me quote him;

Danny King for info on the g3 lines;

Jon Levitt for info on the ♗f4 lines and strengthening my resolve by trying to persuade me not to write this book!

Chris Ward for help with 3 f3 and amusing comments on his loss to Shashikiran;

Peter Wells, for ‘good chat’ and being one of the many who encouraged me with the thought that they were “looking forward” to my book;

Donald Holmes for lending me books as well as brains and stopping me from giving up on the Grünfeld when I was fourteen;

John Henderson, for information;

Paul Butcher, for being the ‘wannabe’ chess player and never failing to amuse me;

Laurence Norman, for advising me not to write a chapter on the “Sexual Dynamics of the Grünfeld”, primarily on the grounds that there aren’t any;

Paul Motwani, for re-assurance when I doubted myself;

Graham Burgess for editorial advice;

John Emms for performing tasks well beyond his duty and supplying me with a steady diet of Dilbert Cartoons to coax me into signing the contract;

All my family for their ever-present support and stretching my imagination by asking the same question – “How’s the book going?” – at frequent intervals.

More generally, I would like to acknowledge M. for her continued interest and support;

John Glendingin for his service to the SCA and his encouragement and backing in my own chess endeavours;

Adam Raoof, for his chess enthusiasm and facilitating the rewarding opportunities provided by “The sponsor”, whom, of course, I would also like to thank.

Finally my thanks go to Tanja, for convincing me that this was a good time in my life to write this book and providing pleasurable diversions in the final weeks of writing. There are many others I would like to thank, and, of course, all the mistakes that follow are entirely their fault.

Jonathan Rowson
Troon, September 1998

1 Why the Grünfeld?

“The unexamined life is not worth living” – Socrates

Few chess-players start to play chess on move one; most are sleep-walkers who awake in the early middlegame. We seem to learn opening theory as a type of chequered security blanket which comforts us with the thought that if we know nothing else about chess, we can at least be sure that these moves have been played before! If we forget this blanket, or if it vanishes suddenly, we are left naked and alone, confronted and embarrassed by a whole host of strategic and tactical problems which, sadly, were forming before our sealed eyes as we slept among them.

The author’s aim is to strip away this security blanket from the very beginning. Indeed, I have sought to present this opening in such a way that you will understand why you want to play the Grünfeld, why your author has particular faith in the recommended variations presented and I also hope to have written in such a way that you will learn and develop with the opening as if it were your very own creation.

The importance of the centre

Most strong players agree that at least some control over the centre (in most

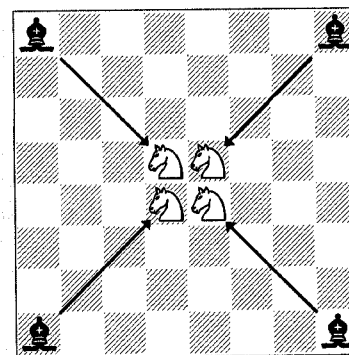
cases they refer to the four squares in the middle) is a pre-requisite for controlling the course of the game. To my mind this is best understood through the realization that almost all the pieces tend to have more scope near the centre of the board. In general we could say that the closer a piece is to the centre, the more effective it is likely to be. Indeed, if your pawns occupy the centre, a principal benefit of this may be that it is difficult for your opponent to develop his pieces on central squares for fear of harassment by your foot soldiers.

Furthermore, controlling the centre is likely to mean that your pieces are flexibly placed for action on either side of the board, whereas dominance on only one side may leave you weakened elsewhere. A particular advantage of having a strong pawn-centre is that it acts as a certain amount of ‘cover’ to prevent the opponent quickly infiltrating your position. This allows the side with the central pawn predominance to consider starting an attack against the king at any moment. However, I can assure you that such attacks only tend to succeed if the centre is secure. In most Grünfeld positions, if Black plays well, the centre will be an area of considerable tension,

and under such conditions White’s forces are likely to be fully occupied and will derive nothing but pain from excessive distraction on the flanks.

It is important to appreciate the importance of the centre here, for there will be many manoeuvres in the following chapters which aim ultimately at nothing else but the control of the central squares (This even applies to 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 ♖a4!).

That said, it is crucial to distinguish between occupying the centre and controlling it.



Q: Who controls the centre?

A: Black!

This is a vivid example of the difference between occupation and control; all of the knights occupy a central square but none of them control one. However, in most cases the player occupying the centre will also control it to some extent and my point is simply that to succeed in your fight for the centre you don’t need to have pieces or

pawns clambering over the central squares. Superior control tends to be followed by occupation, so in the Grünfeld Black puts up a determined fight for the centre by pressurizing the central squares occupied by White. Successful Grünfelds normally highlight that White’s central occupation is insufficiently supported and in these cases Black’s superior central control will result in central destruction, normally leading to central occupation which, together with control, will almost certainly grant the initiative and domination of the whole game. Unsuccessful Grünfelds will see White occupying the central squares and maintaining central control and in these cases White will control the game.

Dynamic Chess Strategy

This heading is the title of a path-breaking book by GM Mihai Suba and much of the reasoning which follows is derived from him. According to Suba, the term ‘defence’ would be improperly associated with an opening like the Grünfeld, and is used just to make the players on the black side feel threatened! Moreover, Suba draws our attention to the “childish joke”:

“Say a number”

“16”

“OK, 17, I win!”

He goes on to explicate his view that “Chess is a game of complete information, and Black’s information is always greater – by one move!”

It is simple enough to understand the joke and the statement, but I think

Suba's key insight was to connect this to the point that "Chess is basically a game of patterns".

The significance of this lies in the inference that successful chess strategy involves successful pattern recognition and response. It follows that it is good to be as flexible as possible!

Your author's thoughts on the first-move debate are still developing and may be the subject for a future book, but I do think we should all be very conscious that our chess heritage has instilled certain unhelpful presumptions which were passed down from players and thinkers who had barely the slightest inkling of dynamic chess strategy. If you play only the Queen's Gambit Declined and answer 1 e4 exclusively with 1...e5, as many leading players seemed to at one time (e.g. the Capablanca-Alekhine match in 1927) then of course you are going to feel that White has some opening advantage because in most lines you will be handing your opponent predictable patterns!

Of course there is much to be said for trying to neutralize White's 'serve' and then eventually trying to outplay your opponent from an equal position. In this case White's advantage is obvious and visible, but in theory it should only last until the early middlegame, when Black is fully mobilized and by which time he will have had to avoid many pitfalls and will often be so relieved to be off the hook that he will happily agree a draw.

What is becoming clearer to my mind is that whereas we know the

nature of White's advantage in such cases, we have not had long enough to be sure of exactly how it is manifest, if at all, within dynamic chess strategy. Indeed, what is happening in openings like the Grünfeld (and the Benko, Sicilian, etc.) is not an attack-defend dialectic ending in a neutral synthesis, but something different entirely; an alien whose presence we have not yet fully acknowledged. White may well hold some advantage in any case, but if he does, and I think it is an 'if' at this stage, then the nature of this advantage is much more difficult to explain conceptually. Personally, I think that if players were not conditioned to believe that White was better, then black players would grow in confidence and Black's results might improve considerably!

This is all up in the clouds at the moment. For the time being I think black players would be well-advised to follow Suba's advice:

Firstly: "Understanding and trusting dynamic structures, their hidden dynamic possibilities, offers the key to success with Black."

And secondly:

"Make sure that all your moves really improve your dynamic potential, and that you cannot be forced into a regressive series without gaining suitable compensation."

I believe the Grünfeld is an opening which allows you to play in the manner outlined above. By seeking early asymmetry and maintaining flexibility, the Grünfeld can be profoundly unsettling for White, as in most cases

it is not clear who is attacking and who is defending, and yet White must be the first to play his hand.

The Generic position

1 d4

White immediately stakes his claim in the centre, opening a path for his queen's bishop and giving Her Majesty some breathing space. An ideal complement would now be e2-e4, when White would seize all the central terrain and thus enable his pieces to be developed more actively than their black counterparts. Indeed, such a gain in space is best understood in terms of an increase in scope for the pieces.

1...♟f6!

This stops White's principal 'threat' by attacking the e4-square and simultaneously brings Black closer to being able to castle, which may be important in the event of an early opening of the centre. White may still seek to control the centre but must appreciate that it is not a simple affair: 2 ♞c3 d5! leaves his c3-knight somewhat lacking in scope (no pressure on d5; nowhere to go) and the absence of an obvious pawn-break means that the battle for the centre will probably be resumed only when both sides are developed and White's first-move advantage will look less relevant. An alternative way to fight for central control is the now infamous 2 ♟g5!?, whereupon White uses his extra move to attack Black immediately with the hope of forcing an early concession in space (e.g. 2...e6 3 e4) or structure (e.g. 2...d5 3

♟xf6). The main drawback of this approach is that White may have to cede the bishop-pair, and this is not to everyone's taste. 2 ♞f3 is less committal and obliges Black to commit himself, at least partially, to a mode of development which will allow White to react accordingly. White does not yet 'threaten' e4, however, and so of course Grünfeld players would now play 2...g6!.

2 c4

What can we say of this move? Firstly it controls the d5-square and so indirectly challenges for e4: after 2...d5?! 3 cxd5, Black will lose the battle for the centre after both 3...♞xd5 4 ♞c3 and 3...♞xd5 4 e4. Hence if Black is determined to keep a grip on the e4-square his main tries are 2...c6, intending ...d5, and 2...e6, intending to meet 3 ♞c3 by 3...♟b4 or 3...d5. Black could also decide that White is already on the verge of controlling the game and confront the two white pawns by 2...c5 or 2...e5, with the aim of quickly re-directing events. There is, however, an alternative approach which challenges the view that a central pawn predominance is to be feared. In general this school of thought begins with:

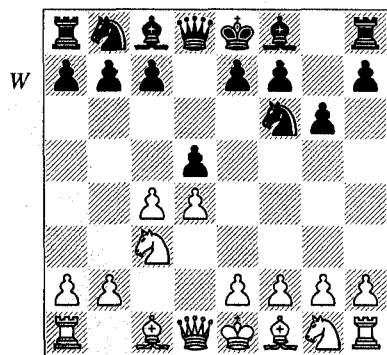
2...g6!

Black prepares to fianchetto and then castle; he has no 'little guys' challenging at this early stage but argues that he will control the centre from a safe distance with his knight covering e4 and d5 and his bishop e5 and d4. Moreover, having played fewer pawn moves he is trying to gain a lead in development.

3 ♖c3

OK, so here's the crunch. If your opponent plays this move you have good reason to suspect that he's going to be trigger-happy with his e-pawn. Indeed, after 3...♗g7 4 e4 we have allowed White to achieve what he seemed to set out to do at move two. In most cases the central pawn-structure will now become fairly locked after Black plays ...e5 or ...c5 and White replies with d5; White will then have seized territory but Black will have some pawn-breaks. In my experience the white player will tend to have considerable knowledge in whatever line he plays here, mainly because he faces the King's Indian so often. Consequently he probably won't feel any tension until around move ten, when he will already have settled down to his usual routine. The desire to confront and unsettle the opponent immediately is one of the reasons I am so fond of...

3...d5! (D)



There is something rather 'in your face' about this move; as though Black

immediately rolls down his shirt sleeves before the formal introductions take place. The knight on f6 already wants a tussle with its rival on c3 and the bishop on f8 claims to be every bit as ready as its counterpart on c1. Moreover, Black has noticed that White's kingside is still at home and is vying to attack the centre before White is suitably mobilized to defend it. Indeed, White is four moves from castling, and Black only two.

On the day I signed the contract for this book I had this position set up in my college room wondering what on earth I was going to write. A friend, let's call him "Paul the wannabe chess player", walked in and inquired as to my look of angst. I explained my predicament and asked for his thoughts on the position. He took a deep breath, stared for a good few seconds and purposefully said "**Solid central thrusting potential**" which had me hurtling for my notebook in recognition of his genius. When I breathlessly asked "For White or Black?", he cheekily replied "Both; it depends on which side I'm on!" at which point I realized he was past his best and chucked him out.

Still, I feel this is a good description of the opening we are about to consider. It is solid in the sense that Black normally has a sound pawn-structure and harmonious development. Its essence is to fight for central control and as for the 'thrusting potential', well obviously the Grünfeld contains considerable dynamism but otherwise the less said about that the better.

2 Appetizers

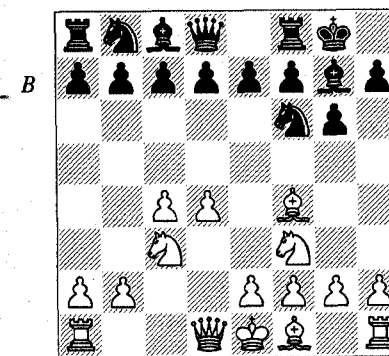
"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you believe that you, too, can become great." – Mark Twain

To whet your appetite for forthcoming chapters I present two Grünfelds played by two world champions. If you ever have doubts that this is the opening for you, I recommend you return here. I hope these games will inspire you, and will help you to play your own Grünfeld masterpieces.

Game 1

D. Byrne – Fischer
New York, Rosenwald
Memorial 1956

1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 ♗g7 4 d4
0-0 5 ♗f4 (D)



5...d5

After some harmless flirting we have arrived at one of White's most dangerous systems. We will study move-orders in greater detail later on, but for now it is worth pointing out that with this move-order I think Black should also consider 5...c5! with the aim of obliging White to play a sub-optimal move compared to the main lines, viz. 6 e3 (after 6 d5 d6 intending ...♗a6-c7, ...♗b8 and ...b5, etc., White's bishop looks awkward on f4; 6 dxc5 is met by 6...♗a6!) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 d5!, when d4 is weakened and the main idea of White's system (to take on c5) has been de-fanged. Henderson-Rowson, Aberdeen 1998 now continued 8 c5?! (too ambitious; 8 h3 is more prudent, but note that White is already under pressure) 8...♗g4! 9 ♖b3?! (White is not "inviting everyone to the party" but 9 ♗e2 ♖c6 intending ...b6 is also bad for White) 9...♗xf3! 10 ♖xb7 ♖bd7 11 c6? (11 gxf3 e5! gives Black the initiative) 11...♗g4 12 c7 ♖c8 13 ♗a6 ♖b6 and White was a piece down and running out of steam. This shows one benefit of being able to play the King's Indian as well as the Grünfeld (Fischer gave White the option of 5 e4) but it would be an option fully

relevant to our subject if White played ♙f4 before ♜c3 . In any case, Black could have played $4\dots\text{d5}$.

6 ♖b3

My comments in the last chapter about White's kingside development are clearly demonstrated in this game, and this move already looks suspect to me as White is unwisely mixing the ♖b3 and ♙f4 systems. Fischer could now have reacted more energetically but it is instructive that he did not. I have mishandled many Grünfelds by wanting to detonate the position prematurely just because my opponent did something slightly peculiar. Black's position is certainly full of dynamic energy but this energy tends to be unleashed most effectively when Black is fully mobilized.

Thus $6\dots\text{dxc4}$ $7 \text{ ♖xc4} \text{ ♙e6}$ $8 \text{ ♖xc7} \text{ ♖xc7}$ $9 \text{ ♙xc7} \text{ ♜a6}$ may get the adrenaline pumping with the realization that you are massively ahead in development but it is also important to realize that losing the c-pawn has left you without a pawn-break and so 10 ♙g3! (to protect f2) $10\dots\text{♜b4}$ 11 ♞d2 intending e3 and a3 looks like it will soak up the pressure and retain the material. Note that when White has not committed himself to e4 there is less pressure on the centre and the bishop on g7 is largely ineffective.

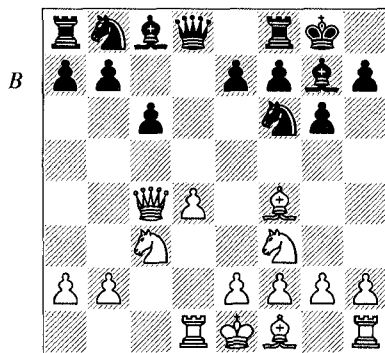
6...c6 7 ♜d1

An encouraging sign: now White has played two rather extravagant moves while the bishop on f1 is still asleep.

7...dxc4!

Forcing White to misplace the queen.

8 ♖xc4 (D)



8...♜bd7!?

Another instructive decision. White will want to move his e-pawn to develop his king's bishop and then Black will have the option of pinning the knight with $\dots\text{♙g4}$. This is an example of the logic behind the maxim 'knights before bishops'; the knight on b8 is almost certainly most comfortable on b6 (unless White is careless, there is nothing for it to do on a6) but the bishop on c8 could conceivably go to e6, f5 or g4. Therefore $8\dots\text{♙e6}$ creates fewer problems for White; after $9 \text{ ♖d3!}?$ ♜a6 $10 \text{ ♖d2!}?$ Black is not worse but I doubt if he is better, as White's centre is still very solid, e.g. $10\dots\text{♜d5!}?$ 11 ♙g3 (11 ♙h6? would be ill-conceived; the rest of White's forces are focused on the centre and the queenside and due to White's central control, the bishop on g3 is a much more effective piece than the bishop on g7) $11\dots\text{♖a5}$ $12 \text{ e3} \text{ ♜xc3}$ $13 \text{ bxc3} \text{ c5!}$ (remember that the Grünfeld is all about fighting for the centre; $13\dots\text{♖xa2}$ $14 \text{ ♖xa2} \text{ ♙xa2}$ $15 \text{ ♜a1} \text{ ♙e6}$ $16 \text{ ♙xa6} \text{ bxa6}$ 17 ♜xa6 is clearly better for White, whose control

of b8 stops Black getting active – note again that the pawn on e3 considerably restricts the g7-bishop) $14 \text{ ♙e2} \text{ b5!}$ $15 \text{ 0-0} \text{ b4}$ with an unclear position.

Note that the straightforward $8\dots\text{b5}$ is also possible, and may transpose to lines discussed in Chapter 12.

9 e4

I suspect this is White's third slight inaccuracy. 9 e3 was more prudent.

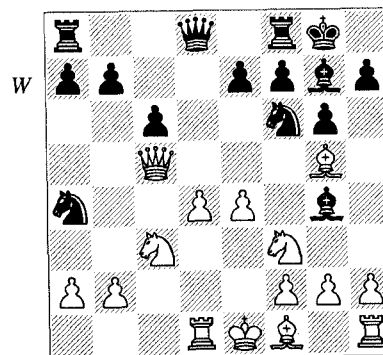
9...♜b6 10 ♖c5 ♙g4!

Now Black is completely mobilized and ready to undertake serious destruction on the centre. White should now put on his safety helmet and hope for the best after 11 ♙e2 . Then Fischer probably intended something like $11\dots\text{♜fd7}$ $12 \text{ ♖a3} \text{ ♙xf3}$ $13 \text{ ♙xf3} \text{ e5!}$ $14 \text{ dxe5} \text{ ♖h4!}?$ $15 \text{ ♙g3} \text{ ♖g5}$ $16 \text{ 0-0} \text{ ♙xe5}$, when Black is very comfortable.

11 ♙g5?

This seems to be a losing move but perhaps this is not so surprising considering that while Black has been completing development, White has used four of his first eleven moves for his major pieces.

11...♜a4!! (D)



One of the most powerful moves of all time. Black is compelled to find a way to attack the white centre, and because White's last move was directed against $\dots\text{♜fd7}$ this is the only way to do so. White was threatening ♙e2 and 0-0 with complete control of the game so although this move is tactically dazzling, from a positional point of view it is virtually forced!

12 ♖a3

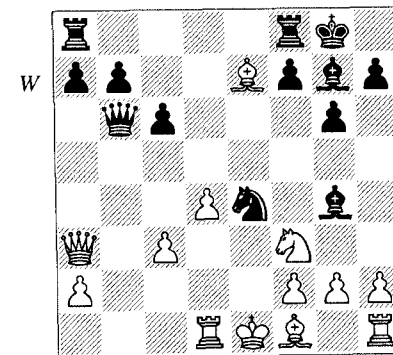
$12 \text{ ♜xa4} \text{ ♜xe4}$ is devastating, e.g. $13 \text{ ♖xe7} \text{ ♖a5+}$ $14 \text{ ♜c3} \text{ ♜xc3}$ $15 \text{ bxc3} \text{ ♜f8}$.

12...♜xc3 13 bxc3 ♜xe4!

Beginning the combination a pawn up with total mobility is a good sign but Black really had to play the next few moves very well to snuff out all resistance.

14 ♙xe7 ♖b6! (D)

Not $14\dots\text{♖e8}$ 15 ♜d3! and ♜e3 , when White is still kicking.



15 ♙c4!

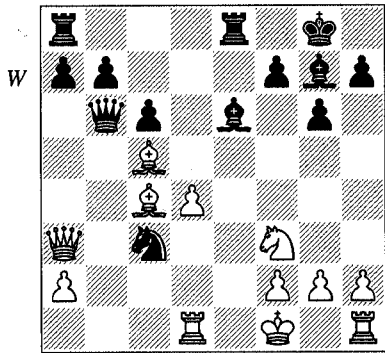
Active defence. $15 \text{ ♙xf8} \text{ ♙xf8}$ $16 \text{ ♖b3} \text{ ♜xc3}$ $17 \text{ ♖xb6} \text{ axb6}$ $18 \text{ ♜a1} \text{ ♙xf3}$ $19 \text{ gxf3} \text{ ♙a3}$ $20 \text{ ♞d2} \text{ ♙b2}$ $21 \text{ ♜e1} \text{ ♜d5}$

gives Black a massive endgame initiative.

15...♖xc3!

Chomping the base of the central pawn-chain.

16 ♖c5 ♜fe8+ 17 ♖f1 ♖e6!! (D)



This is the move which really gets the crowd jumping up and down. It is a truly beautiful retreat, regardless of the fact that it is forced.

18 ♖xb6

The simplest and most stunning point is the Philidor smothered mate: 18 ♖xe6 ♜b5+ 19 ♖g1 ♗e2+ 20 ♖f1 ♗g3+ 21 ♖g1 ♜f1+ 22 ♜xf1 ♗e2#. Also sweet is the exploitation of a new-found pin: 18 ♜xc3 ♜xc5.

18...♖xc4+ 19 ♖g1 ♗e2+ 20 ♖f1 ♗xd4+ 21 ♖g1 ♗e2+ 22 ♖f1 ♗c3+ 23 ♖g1 axb6 24 ♜b4 ♜a4 25 ♜xb6 ♗xd1 26 h3 ♜xa2 27 ♖h2 ♗xf2

The harvest is complete; not a bad day out for a thirteen-year-old boy, as Fischer was at the time.

28 ♜e1 ♜xe1 29 ♜d8+ ♖f8 30 ♗xe1 ♖d5 31 ♗f3 ♗e4 32 ♜b8 b5 33 h4 h5

Notice that Black's pieces are all protecting each other – a sign of good technique.

34 ♗e5 ♖g7 35 ♖g1 ♖c5+ 36 ♖f1 ♗g3+ 37 ♖e1 ♖b4+ 38 ♖d1 ♖b3+ 39 ♖c1 ♗e2+ 40 ♖b1 ♗c3+ 41 ♖c1 ♜c2# (0-1)

Game 2
Hübner – Kasparov
Brussels 1986

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 ♗f3 ♖g7 5 ♜a4+

Not a move to be underestimated; Black must react precisely.

5...♖d7!

More combative than 5...c6.

6 ♜b3 dxc4!

Again the most fighting approach, though 6...♖c6 is a solid alternative.

7 ♜xc4

7 ♜xb7 is foolhardy considering White's lack of development. 7...♗c6! 8 ♖f4 ♜b8 9 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 10 ♖xc7 ♜xb2 gives Black a strong initiative.

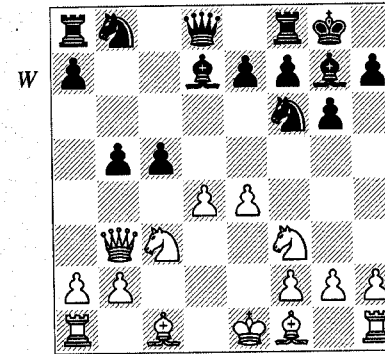
7...0-0 8 e4

Effectively we now have a main-line Russian system with Black having played ...♖d7 already. I guess White wants to discourage the Hungarian system with ...a6, ...b5 and ...♖b7. At any rate Kasparov's solution looks more than adequate.

8...b5!? 9 ♜b3

White can also try 9 ♗xb5 ♗xe4 10 ♜xc7 but after 10...♗c6 11 ♖d3 ♗b4 12 ♖xe4 ♖xb5 13 ♜xd8 ♜axd8 14 ♖d2!? Black should play 14...♗d3+!?, which leads to equality according to Georgadze.

9...c5! (D)



Again we see the power of attacking the centre before White can fully mobilize.

10 e5

10 dxc5 ♗a6 11 e5 ♗g4 12 h3 ♗xe5 13 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 14 ♖e3 ♜c8 is also good for Black.

10...♗g4 11 ♖xb5 cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♖xb5 13 ♗dxb5 a6!

Forcing White to decentralize.

14 ♗a3 ♜d4! 15 ♜c2 ♗c6 16 ♜e2 ♜xe5!

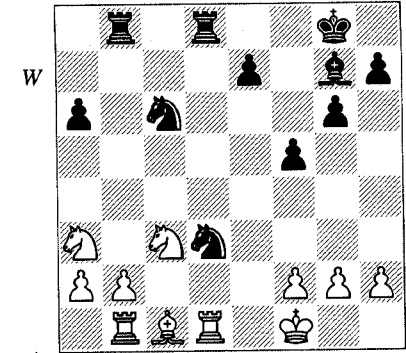
A very instructive choice of capture; the queen was White's most effective defender so Black exchanges it and simultaneously invites himself into the d3-square.

17 ♜xe5 ♗gxe5 18 0-0 ♗d3 19 ♜b1 ♜ab8 20 ♗d1 ♜fd8 21 ♖f1 f5! (D)

A deep move by Kasparov, anticipating that White will want to play ♖e2 and ♖e3.

22 ♖e2 ♗ce5 23 ♗a4

Or 23 f4 ♗xc1+ 24 ♜dxc1 ♗d3, winning.



23...♜d6!

A multi-purpose move with ideas of doubling on the d-file or playing ...♜e6.

24 ♖e3 f4 25 ♖c5 f3+!

The beginning of the end for White, but notice how Kasparov had his pieces on optimal squares before commencing the onslaught.

26 gxf3 ♗f4+ 27 ♖e3 ♜f6 28 ♖xe7 ♗g2+ 29 ♖e2 ♜xf3 30 ♖d6 ♗f4+ 31 ♖f1 ♗g4 32 ♜d2

32 ♖xb8 ♜xf2+ 33 ♖g1 ♜g2+ 34 ♖f1 ♗xh2+ 35 ♖e1 ♜e2# is mate.

32...♜e8 33 ♗c4 ♗xh2+ 34 ♖g1 ♗g4

The black knights are rather more effective than their counterparts.

35 ♜f1 ♖d4 36 ♖c5

36 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 37 b3 ♜ef8 will win the f2-pawn.

36...♜g3+ 37 ♖h1 ♜h3+ 38 ♖g1 ♗h2 0-1

A beautiful finish to an awesome game; there is no reasonable defence to the threat of ...♗f3#. This was a good example of Black's central pressure leading to central occupation followed by complete control of the game.

3 Dealing with Delroy

Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Frank Outlaw

While you're at it, keep an eye on White's d-pawn!

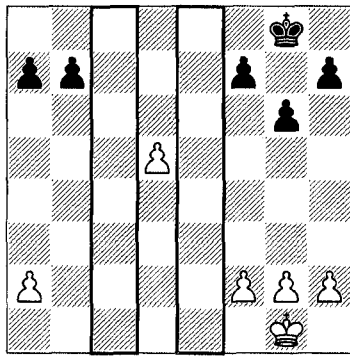
In many lines of the Grünfeld this central pawn is unopposed and understanding how to deal with it is of paramount importance. In fact, having played the Grünfeld for several years now I have developed something frighteningly close to a personal relationship with this pawn and so eventually, out of respect, I decided to give it a name. Naming chess pieces may not be to everyone's taste, but this particular foot-soldier is so omnipresent in what follows that I think the material will be more easily digestible if we enliven this key feature a little bit.

So, let me introduce Delroy. You will soon be well acquainted.

"If you are afraid of a passed d-pawn you should not play the Grünfeld" – Jon Spielman

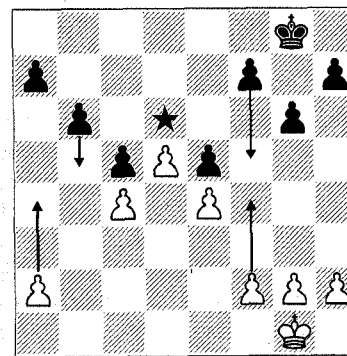
The structure in the following diagram is most likely to arise out of an exchange variation where Black has played ...c5 and then captured on d4. White will have recaptured on d4 and will be threatening to gain space with

d5 so Black will have chosen to play ...e6 to hold this back for a few moves and then White will have advanced later anyway, leaving a structure similar to the diagram. Note that in some lines (e.g. the ♖b1 Exchange) White may even play this structure without his a-pawn. In any case this tends to be Delroy at his most dangerous. The pawn is not only a mere three squares from queening but such an advanced central pawn gives White a considerable amount of space for his pieces and there is often ample scope for White to use his centralized forces to attack Black's king. Remember in



most cases Black will have exchanged his king's knight as early as move five and so may only have his g7-bishop for protection; if this piece is removed Black's king can start to look very bare indeed. That said, Dangerous Del is also a bit of a lone ranger; he's a long way from home and can easily become very weak from his excursions. Furthermore, if Black can securely blockade the pawn then he can make counterplay with his queenside majority. However, simply blockading the pawn is not always enough because the danger often lies not so much in Delroy himself but his role as a decoy to provide opportunities for the other guys supporting him. Finally, control of the open e- and c-files is an important point of contention. Black must be ultra-careful not to allow a major piece to the seventh rank for, combined with Delroy, this will almost certainly be decisive.

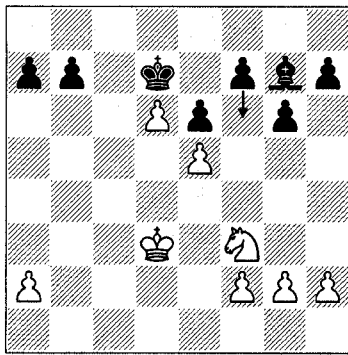
"The passed pawn is a criminal who should be kept under lock and key." – Aron Nimzowitsch



Such a structure would normally result from an exchange variation where Black plays ...c5 and ...e5 to attack the white centre, and White replies with d5 to close the position and secure a protected passed pawn. Other things being equal, this pawn-structure favours White because not only is Delroy once again the most influential pawn but there is also a clear plan of attacking Black's queenside with a4-a5. Note that in such structures the black pawn is often better left on b7 if possible, to prevent this plan, and that White is often better to leave his c-pawn on c3 so that the d-square is not a weakness in the event of the position opening somehow. This is most likely to occur after f4 by White, when Black would normally exchange his e-pawn for White's f-pawn (either by capturing on f4 or recapturing on e5). In these cases Black has to be very alert to how sustainable his blockade of these squares may be because if the initiative passes to White, Black's position can quickly become hopeless, as he is rolled over in the centre.

For his part, Black will be seeking to implement the breaks ...b5 and ...f5 to secure his fair share of activity and in some cases may try to attack in King's Indian-style with ...f5-f4, ...g5-g4, etc. In general, Black does well to exchange dark-squared bishops and blockade the d-pawn with a knight on d6. This way his minor pieces will be as unrestricted as possible.

"The passed pawn has a soul, desires and fears." – J.H. Donner

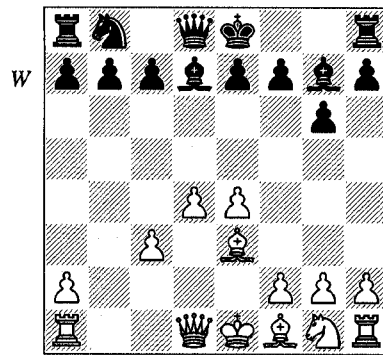


It is rare for Delroy to be so deeply entrenched in Black's position but this configuration can sometimes be provoked by Black by allowing White to advance his e- and d-pawns with the aim of hitting back at them with ...f6, which would here cause White's centre to crumble. Note that if the white f-pawn were on f4 to support the pawn-chain then Black would have no way to undermine it and would be positionally lost. It is OK to allow White a central pawn predominance, but Black must be sure that he can either undermine it or somehow adequately play around it.

Delroy comes in many other shapes and forms, but the following games should give you a good idea of what you are up against.

Game 3
Åkesson – Rowson
Copenhagen 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 e4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5
 ♗xd5 5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 ♕g7 7 ♕e3
 ♕d7? (D)



This is a rather embarrassingly bad move for someone who has been preaching the virtues of attacking the centre! I heard later that Bent Larsen was talking the crowd through the game in the commentary room and stopped at this point with a flummoxed look and said: "There must be some idea behind this strange move, but I don't see it". The great Dane sees most things over the chess board but I'm not surprised he didn't see the idea here, because there isn't one! There is a little story, however, which should serve as a warning against blindly following the games of top players. The truth is that I thought I was following a piece of hot theory from a game between Salov and Leko. Since I had been looking for an unconventional way to play against 7 ♕e3 for a long time and I consider Leko to be a formidable exponent of the Grünfeld, it delighted me to see that he seemed to equalize with this obscure move. I only saw the game from a brief look at a friend's copy of *Schachwoche* a few minutes before the game but I figured I would

work out the idea at the board. It turns out that Leko did indeed play 7...♕d7, but only after 7 ♕b5+, when it makes much more sense! (See Salov-Leko, Belgrade 1996, Chapter 8.)

I haven't since found the magazine, or tried to sue the editors, but I think I can make sense of how this all happened. If White now played 8 ♕e2 he would be a tempo ahead of the ♕b5+ lines (bishop on e3), but by playing ♕g5 later, White (in the 'imaginary' game) wasted the tempo with the other bishop (which never actually went to e3!) and all was smoothed out. At any rate I am glad I can put this experience to some use because not only do we see Delroy at his most devilish but we have a classic example of how things can go wrong for Black in the Grünfeld when he doesn't have enough central control.

8 ♗f3 0-0 9 ♜d2 c5 10 d5!

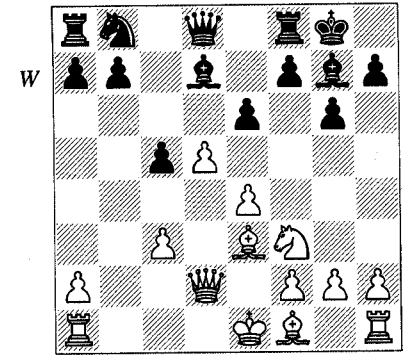
Here he comes. 10 ♚b1 was also a good move. The main thing is to stop Black pretending that his seventh move made any sense, which might have happened after 10 ♕e2 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♕c6!, when 12 d5 would not be kind to the rook on a1.

10...e6!? (D)

I tried my best to fight back, but the Grünfeld can be mutually unforgiving and here it will not forgive Black for being too late in his fight for the centre.

11 ♕e2!

Sensibly avoiding any complications that might arise after 11 ♕xc5, when Black has ideas of ...exd5 and ...♜c8. Åkesson realized that without



sufficient central counterplay Black is doomed to passive suffering.

11...exd5 12 exd5 ♜a5?! 13 ♖c1
 ♗a6?!

I guess I was still trying to figure out what Leko had in mind. Black has decentralized his queen and his knight and has a solitary bishop to protect his king. I think if I'd been shown this position without prior knowledge I would have been more modest, kept my queen on d8 and played ...♕g4 and ...♗d7, when I would still have had chances to defend. Now it's probably already too late.

14 0-0!

14 h4 was possible but there is no reason for White to take any risks. If I had been walking around the room as White decided on his 14th move and someone had asked me "What are you doing?" I would have been hard-pressed to find a good answer, so it's better not to force Black to react to something. I repeat that in the Grünfeld if Black loses control of the centre he tends to lose control of the game. Furthermore, Delroy is by far the most impressive

pawn on the board and is by no means under lock and key.

14...♖fe8 15 ♖fe1

White's play is impressively controlled, whereas Black's position, particularly on the queenside, is a picture of disharmony.

15...♖ac8

OK, so I finally have a positional threat of sorts – namely ...c4 followed by ...♘c5 and some activity, but although both sides are fully mobilized, White has preserved his early initiative and now conducts the orchestra:

16 ♖h6! ♖h8

If only my knight were on d6 or f6 I would have a playable position but, as is often the case, one bad piece means a bad game.

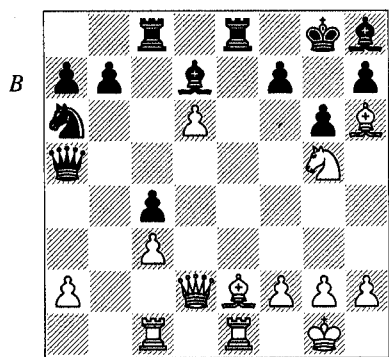
17 ♘g5!

Attacking Black's weakest point.

17...c4

I have to try to create counterplay.

18 d6! (D)



White threatens a sudden ambush with ♖f3-d5 and Black's scattered forces are defenceless. If you are

wondering exactly how Delroy himself fits into the picture then just imagine how much of a relief it would be to Black if he were back on b2. Indeed, it is because of this mighty pawn that Black's forces have effectively been cut in two.

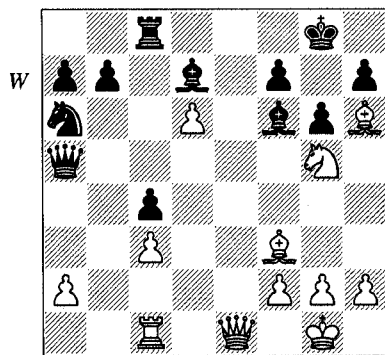
18...♖e5

This gave me only a little respite but as I couldn't move the d7-bishop due to Delroy, couldn't re-centralize the knight because of ♖xc4, and ...♖f6 wouldn't take any sting out of ♖f3, this seemed like my best chance.

18...♖c5 appears to lose to 19 ♖xc4!

♖xc4 (19...♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 ♖xc4 21 ♖e7) 20 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 21 d7 ♖d8 22 ♖e2.

19 ♖f3 ♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 ♖f6 (D)



Now I thought I might be out of the woods as 21 ♖xb7 ♖e8 22 ♖d2 ♘c5 seemed almost attractive for Black.

21 ♖d2!

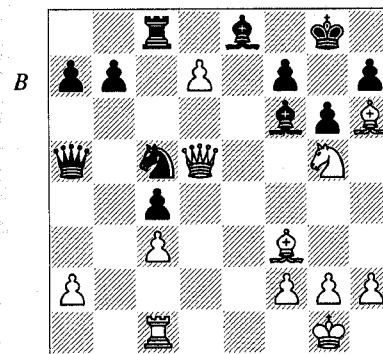
Back again. This move really hurt. However, it is very instructive to see that, without allowing Black counterplay, White retains a huge advantage

because of the persistent strength of the passed d-pawn.

21...♘c5

What else?

22 ♖d5! ♖e8 23 d7!! (D)



Delroy delivers in style. Both captures drop a monarch so I resigned.

1-0

Game 4

Atalik – Ftačnik

Beijing 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♖g7 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 e4 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 ♖b5+ ♖d7!

8...♘c6 is also playable but after 9 0-0 cxd4 10 cxd4 0-0 11 ♖e3 ♖g4 12 ♖xc6 (12 d5!?) 12...bxc6 13 ♖c1 Black's position has never appealed to me; I prefer to keep more tension in the position, and if I'm going to have a weak c6-pawn I like to have something on the b-file to attack as compensation.

9 ♖xd7+!?

Dvoretzky suggests that this is quite dangerous for Black and I think this is

probably true. It does allow Black to mobilize smoothly, but it is now more difficult to apply any serious pressure to the white centre. Of course 9 ♖e2 would transpose to Chapter 8.

9...♖xd7

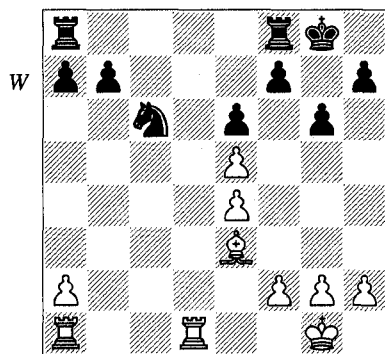
9...♘d7 will lead to positions where Black has little pressure against the white centre but on the other hand the knight will be quite well placed on c4. I'm not overly keen on such an approach and it's worth comparing this to Game 13 (Karpov-Kasparov), where the positions will be similar.

10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e3 cxd4

Considering the idea that follows, 11...e6 should be considered. Black would have less than nothing to fear in the resulting ending after 12 ♘e5 ♖xe5 13 dxe5 ♖xd1 followed by ...♘c6 and ...b6 because the bishop has much less scope. Black can also try to do without ...e6 (after exchanging on d4) but then White will have idea of d5 and ♖d4, and I think this gives some advantage.

12 cxd4 e6 13 ♘e5!?

This is a very clever move by GM Atalik, who plays the Grünfeld for both sides. He had probably prepared this idea with an eye to the type of position we reach in the game. His aim is to exchange knights so that when the d-pawn gets going Black will be left without a good blockader. The drawback is that Black could now have played 13...♖xe5! 14 dxe5 ♖xd1 (Black can also seriously consider trying to keep the queens on, or at least force White to take them off, but then a certain amount of care is needed to avoid being mated on g7) 15 ♖fxd1 ♘c6 (D).



This is quite a common type of ending and is not without dangers for either side. White hopes that he has the superior minor piece (pawns on both sides) and that his space advantage and active rooks will outweigh Black's long-term asset of having the better pawn-structure. Indeed, White may be close to lost if the rooks come off because Black can readily create a passed pawn and White cannot. However, if White keeps at least one active rook it will be difficult for Black to do anything with his king, whereas White's king can quickly become quite active. I suspect the position is about equal, or possibly even a tad better for White, but personally I would prefer Black because there is a very clear plan of exchanging rooks whereas White's plan is more generally to keep the pressure and that leaves more room for error.

13...♖d6 14 ♖b3

14 ♖f4 is dangerous, but after the cool 14...♞e8 Black can hold his own:

a) 15 ♖a4 ♘c6! with the idea of meeting 16 ♘xc6 by 16...♞xf4.

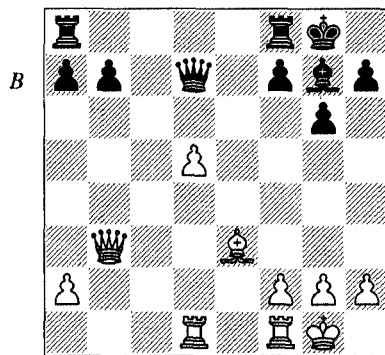
b) 15 ♞b1 ♖a6 (15...♘c6 16 ♞xb7) 16 ♞b3 ♘c6 17 ♘xc6 (17 ♞xb7 ♞xb7 18 ♞xb7 ♘xd4) 17...bxc6 and Black is equal here as c6 is no weaker than d4.

c) 15 ♘xg6? ♞xd4 16 ♞xd4 ♘xd4 17 ♞ad1 ♘c6! is fine for Black.

14...♘c6 15 ♘xc6 ♞xc6?!

Considering the course of the game, Black should have played 15...bxc6 16 e5! (16 ♖a4 e5; 16 ♞fd1!?) 16...♞d5, when after 17 ♞ab1 White keeps an advantage due to the inactivity of the g7-bishop. White's 'bad' bishop is only likely to be an issue in a pure bishop ending.

16 d5 exd5 17 exd5 ♞d7 18 ♞ad1 (D)



White has a distinct advantage.

It is true that Delroy is not causing any particular disarray and also true that he is unlikely to be reincarnated in the near future. Moreover, all of Black's pieces have a decent amount of scope, the queen is not easily budged from d7 and the queenside majority is intact and seemingly brimming with potential. Yet White is clearly better – why?

Because Delroy is in his element – this d-pawn is extremely valuable and gives White a large advantage in space. Firstly I should say that it is not weak because even if Black managed to attack it three times White could easily defend it with equal force and secondly Black does not have any piece which can act as an active blockader. A queen or rook will almost always be under-performing if it has to stand guard over a measly pawn and Black cannot transfer his bishop to d6, mainly due to the resulting weakness of his kingside. It is generally thought that knights are the best blockaders since their L-shape influence means that standing in front of an opposing pawn does not restrict them at all. Indeed if we were to play the chess tooth-fairy and silently drop horses on d6 (black) and f3 (white) then Black's problems would be reduced considerably. This is because Black would then have an active piece which could annoy White and further restrict Delroy. As it is, Black really can't do anything to irritate his opponent and so White dictates events. If the black pawns were already on a5 and b5 and it were Black's move then I suspect the position would be about equal as Black could muster some serious counterplay. Of course Black has to try this approach anyway, but as we will see, White's threats are much the more immediate.

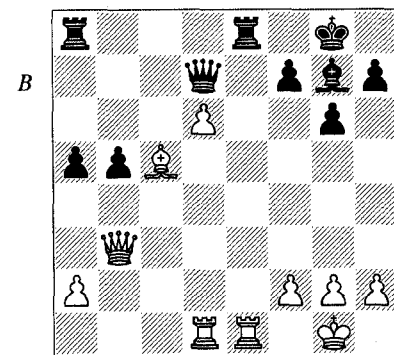
18...b5

18...♞e5 19 d6! is a more concrete reason why Black cannot blockade with the bishop.

19 d6!

Clearly Atalik is a spaceman. White's space advantage gives his pieces extra scope. Now look at the difference in freedom between the two queens – all because of Delroy.

19...a5 20 ♞fe1 ♞fe8 21 ♘c5! (D)



Target entry square on e7. As I've said, passed pawn plus seventh rank usually spells victory, so things have already become critical for Black.

21...♞f8!

After 21...♞f6 22 ♞f3 ♘g7 23 ♘e3 ♘e5 24 ♘h6+ ♘xh6 25 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 26 ♞f4+ ♞g5 (26...♘g7 27 ♞xe5+ ♘g8 28 h4! gives White a clear advantage; the d-pawn ties Black down while White negotiates possible entry routes) 27 h4 f6 28 ♞d5 White is winning according to Atalik.

22 ♞d5 b4 23 g3

An example of the benefit of Black's second move. I find that White often feels it is desirable to take time out to guard against possible back-rank mates and in this case it offers the crucial respite Black needs to begin organizing a defence.

23...♖xe1+ 24 ♖xe1 ♔d8 25 ♖e4!

White targets the f7-pawn to tie Black down. There is now some danger that Black will fall into zugzwang.

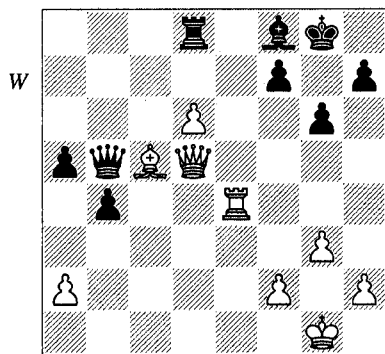
25...♗b5

Not 25...♗xd6? 26 ♔d4.

26 ♔f4 ♗e8

Such is Black's disarray that this appears to be the only move, as can be seen from these lines: 26...♔d7 27 ♗e5 ♔d8 (27...h6 28 ♗e8) 28 ♔xf7! ♕xf7 29 ♗d5+ wins for White; 26...♗d7 27 ♗b6 ♔e8 28 ♗xa5 ♔e1+ 29 ♕g2.

27 ♔e4 ♗b5 (D)



28 ♔f4?

White loses the thread just when the time had come for the knock-out. He should have tried 28 ♔d4!, as pointed out by his opponent. This is certainly not an easy move to understand so don't worry if it confuses you. It's worth considering though, because the variations demonstrate the awesome power of the white d-pawn:

a) 28...♗c8 29 d7! ♔d8 30 ♗a7! is winning – Ftačnik: 30...♗a6 31 ♔f4 ♗e6 32 ♗xe6 fxe6 33 ♔d4.

b) 28...♗g7 29 ♔f4 ♔d7 30 ♗a8+ ♗f8 31 ♗e8 wins.

c) 28...♗xd6 29 ♗xd6 ♗xd5 30 ♔xd5 a4 31 ♔d4 wins, viz. 31...b3 32 axb3 axb3 33 ♗e5.

d) 28...♔e8 29 ♕g2! is cruel but Black can't do anything.

28...♗e8 29 a3? ♗e6!

Relief! It feels like a big exhalation after a prolonged holding of breath.

30 ♗xe6 fxe6 31 axb4 axb4 32 ♔xb4 ♗xd6 33 ♗xd6 ♔xd6 34 ♔b8+ 1/2-1/2

Game 5

Epishin – I. Gurevich

New York 1993

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♗xd5 5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 ♗g7

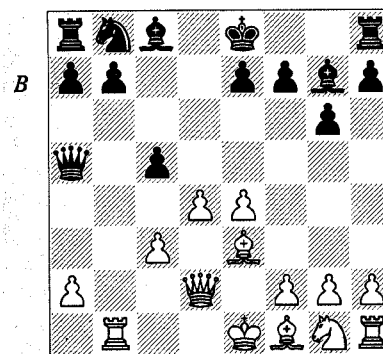
It is largely a matter of taste whether to prefer this to 6...c5 and since I have advised meeting 7 ♗b5+ with 7...♗d7 in either case it doesn't seem to matter. I think the main move-order point is not to castle before playing ...c5 as this can take the sting out of the ...♗a5 systems against 7 ♗e3 (or 8 ♗e3).

7 ♗e3 c5 8 ♗d2 ♗a5 9 ♔b1 (D)

White threatens ♔b5.

9...b6

This important move was discovered by Adorjan, co-author of *Winning With the Grünfeld* and author of *Black is OK*. In general it is crucial for the Grünfeld player to realize that in such positions dxc5 is rarely a threat because, although White may win a pawn, he loses control of the centre and allows Black open lines to attack the a- and c-pawns.



9...a6 is also playable but White would normally then play 10 ♔c1, when after 10...cxd4 (it is unlikely that any other plan, e.g. with ...♗d7 and ...b5, will apply enough pressure on the centre) 11 cxd4 ♗xd2+ 12 ♕xd2 White can claim that Black's extra tempo has significantly weakened his queenside, although a young Gata Kamsky famously beat Karpov from this position having played ...♗c6-a7 at some point, which I found quaintly ironic.

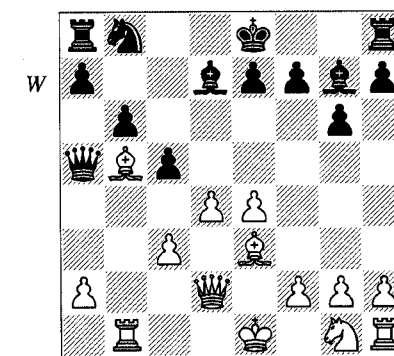
Note that 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♗xd2+ 11 ♕xd2 gives White a favourable version of the endgame we see in Chapter 7. Black will probably have to weaken the queenside with ...b6 in order to develop the c8-bishop.

10 ♗b5+

10 ♔b5 is not a significant threat here: 10...♗a4 11 ♔b2 ♗a6! 12 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 13 ♗e2?! (13 f3 0-0 is slightly more comfortable for Black) 13...e5! 14 0-0 ♔d8 15 ♗d1 ♗c4! (firmly anchored) 16 ♔d2 0-0 17 f3 exd4 18 cxd4 cxd4 19 ♗xd4 ♗b4!. As so often happens when White's central duo are no longer an item, Black's pieces start

to flood the central squares. Indeed, Black was clearly better here in Dokhoian-Dvoirys, Helsinki 1992 according to Dvoirys.

10...♗d7 (D)



11 ♗e2!?

11 ♗d3 is a major alternative which I think is under-rated. White intends the simple ♗e2, possibly followed by 0-0 or h4 depending on the amount of caffeine in the blood stream. Black should then simply complete his development by 11...0-0 12 ♗e2 ♗c6 (Timman played ...♗c6 first, but it doesn't seem to matter; White can put his king's knight on f3 instead of e2 if he chooses but then it's more difficult to make d5 a threat so Black can probably just castle, possibly play ...e6, and do something useful with the rooks) and now:

a) 13 dxc5?! is an attempt to try to win a pawn but this only serves to open lines for the black pieces. It's worth looking into this a little more because this anti-positional move was suggested in Burgess and Pedersen's

recent book *Beating the Indian Defences*.

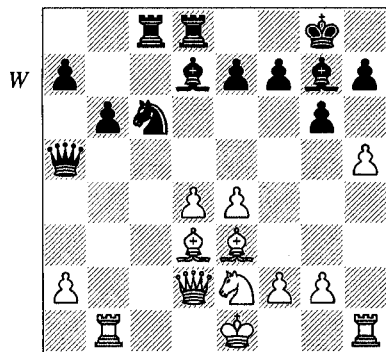
a) 13...♗e5!? 14 cxb6 axb6 15 0-0 ♖xa2 16 ♗b2 ♖a3 17 ♗xb6 ♗fd8 18 ♘d4 ♗ac8 “with compensation for the material” is given by Yuneev. Burgess finds this assessment “hard to believe”, but I don’t really see why. I always find that it is much easier to play the ‘underdog’ in such positions because psychologically White feels obliged to ‘convert the material advantage’ and this usually involves unwisely compromising your coordination and putting a lot of pressure on yourself to display your technique to the world. Black’s pieces are almost ideally placed here. Not only is White’s c-pawn attacked but Black also has ideas of taking on d3 and playing ...e5, playing ...♗g4 and taking on e3 or waiting for the right moment to play ...♘c4. I think Black’s position is easier to play, and that White would do well to give the pawn back and soak up the pressure before Black’s initiative assumes real proportions. I suspect that best play may now be 19 ♗a6 ♗a8 20 ♗e2 ♗ac8 with a repetition.

My only dissatisfaction with that last line is that Black isn’t left with any queenside pawns and so if White realizes he is not better he can concentrate on preventing Black from winning and has reasonable chances of success. Forgive me for dwelling on this sub-line but I want to make the point that White’s plan of taking on c5 is very frequently ill-conceived in the Grünfeld.

a2) 13...bxc5!? is an attempt to hold on to a queenside pawn. 14 ♗b5

♖a4 15 ♗xc5 ♘e5 16 0-0 is unclear according to Yuneev. The automatic 16...♗fd8?! gives Black some tactical problems after 17 ♗d5! but otherwise I prefer Black here. White’s rook on c5 is very active so attempting to remove it makes sense: after 16...♗fc8!? I would rather be Black because White has lots of weaknesses to defend and his pieces have some communication difficulties.

b) And now I present the game Åkesson-Timman, Malmö 1997, which I think is an exemplary performance from Black: 13 h4 ♗fd8! 14 h5 cxd4! 15 cxd4 ♗ac8! (D).

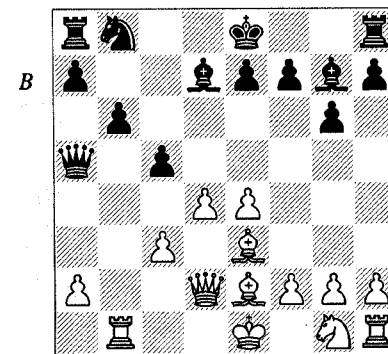


Black is willing to enter the ending now that he is fully mobilized and White’s h-pawn-push looks a little obtuse now that there is no imminent threat of checkmate (i.e. h4-h5 has been met by rooks on c8 and d8). Previously Black had blocked the h-pawn with 13...h5 but I think this game demonstrates that there is no need.

16 ♖xa5 ♘xa5 17 ♗g5 (17 ♗c1 was better, and equal according to

Timman) 17...f6! (normally this is not the best way to meet ♗g5 as it leaves some weaknesses and blocks the bishop on g7 but here Timman’s initiative allows him to justify the concession with the activity which follows) 18 ♗d2 ♘c4 19 ♗b4 (giving away the two bishops in such an open position with pawns on both sides would mean that Black would always be the only side with winning chances) 19...e5! (notice how Timman’s energy is directed towards the centre) 20 hxg6 hxg6 21 dxe5 (if 21 d5 I suspect Timman intended 21...a5 22 ♗d2 b5!, when Black is firmly in the driving seat) 21...♘xe5 (the centre has dissolved and Black’s rooks are much better than their counterparts; the power with which Timman plays the whole game is an inspiration to all Grünfeld players) 22 ♗a6 ♗c2 23 f4 ♘c6 24 ♗c3 ♗g4! 25 ♗c4+ ♗f8 26 ♗b2 ♗xc3! 27 ♘xc3 f5 28 e5 ♘xe5! 29 fxe5 ♗xe5 30 ♗c2 ♗xc3+ 31 ♗f2 ♗d4+ 32 ♗g3 ♗e5+ 33 ♗f2 f4 34 ♗h7 ♗d1 35 g3 ♗d4+ 0-1.

Returning to the position after 11 ♗e2 (D):



11...0-0!?

Of course there is nothing wrong with this move but 11...♗c6 is now preferred because it forces White to do something awkward to defend e4. On the other hand, c6 is taken away from the black knight. White now tends to play 12 ♗d3!? which is rather peculiar, but considering Åkesson-Timman we can see that it may be in White’s interest to prevent ...♘c6. The key game in this line is Shaked-Kasparov, Tilburg 1997: 12...♘d7!? 13 ♗e2 ♗d8! (this was a novelty at the time; the idea is to prevent White from castling; for the record, I think 13...0-0 is also fully adequate) 14 f3 (14 0-0 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♖xd2 16 ♗xd2 ♘c5! is good for Black; 14 0-0 ♘e5 is suitably unbalanced) 14...0-0 15 h4!? h5! 16 ♗g5 (16 ♗f2 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♘e5! 18 ♗b5 ♖xd2 19 ♗xd2 ♗xb5 20 ♗xb5 ♘c4 {anchor!} is slightly better for Black according to Kasparov; however, 16 ♗b2!? looks playable for White, whereupon Kasparov recommends the splendidly creative line 16...♗a4! 17 ♗f2 ♘e5 18 dxe5 c4 19 ♘d4 cxd3 20 e6 ♗c2 21 exf7+ ♗xf7 22 ♘c6 ♖xc3 23 ♘xd8+ ♗xd8, when Black has the initiative) 16...♗fe8 17 ♗c1 ♗b7 18 d5 ♘e5 19 ♗b1?! ♘c4 20 ♖f4?? ♗e5 0-1.

12 ♗c1 ♗d8!?

It may be that this move helped Kasparov to find the above idea, but the main reason for showing this game was to demonstrate how ineffective Delroy can be when insufficiently supported.

13 d5

13 ♖f3 ♗b5! is an important idea in this line, and here it seems to equalize.

13... ♖a4!?

This is a very brave idea from Gurevich. After 14 c4 ♖a6 he thought he would have enough play on the queen-side (in *Informator 57*), and it's not obvious to me that he doesn't: 15 ♗d1 ♖a3 16 ♖e2 ♖b4 17 ♗b3 a5!.

Still, it's much safer to play against the centre, because here Black's position is hanging by a thread.

14 ♗d3 e6! 15 ♖e2 exd5 16 exd5 ♗g4!

The bishop has to move to allow the knight to d7 (see Game 3 to witness how useless it is on a6) and Black hopes to provoke f3 or entice the knight to a funny square.

17 ♖f4 ♗c8!

Black recognizes the importance of completing development.

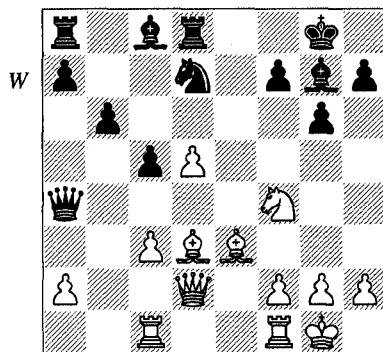
17...g5 would be too weakening; note that after 18 ♖e2 ♗xd5? Black is abruptly punished with 19 ♗xh7+. 17...♖d7 18 h3 forces Black to compromise his structure with 18...♗f5 19 ♗xf5 gxf5. I remind you that playing the Grünfeld allows so many active opportunities that it is easy to lose your head with excitement. It is a dynamic opening, but it is soundly based and so before compromising your position like this it's important to ask whether your new-found 'dynamism' really helps your position more than it harms it.

18 0-0

Gurevich doesn't say what he intended after 18 ♖e2 but I assume there

were good reasons why drawing this early didn't occur to the players.

18... ♖d7 (D)



White's pieces do not coordinate particularly well and Black already has ideas of ...♖e5-c4. Note that Delroy is not the main feature of the position as Black can manoeuvre around him and create threats of his own. White should probably now play something sober, like 19 c4, but the normally solid Epishin got a rush of blood to the head.

19 ♗c2? ♖xa2 20 ♖h5

The idea is 20...gxf5? 21 ♗xh7+. Also, White could not perpetually attack the queen because of the weakness of c3.

20... ♖f6!?

Effectively a winning move but 20...♗h8 looks equally effective and doesn't allow even a hint of counterplay. White's strategy has failed since his forces have not supported Delroy. Black's pieces were more purposefully placed and now he reaps the rewards.

21 ♖xg7 ♗xd5! 22 ♖e2 ♗a6! 23 ♖f3 ♗xg7

The weakened dark squares are largely unexploitable because Black is so well coordinated. White has almost no compensation for the two pawns and Black won 23 moves later.

24 ♖fe1 ♗e8 25 h4 ♗c8 26 c4 ♗d6 27 h5 ♗de6 28 h6+ ♗g8 29 ♗e2 ♖a3 30 ♗ce1 ♖c3 31 ♗a4 ♗d7 32 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 33 ♖b7 ♖f8 34 ♖xa7 ♖xc4 35 ♖a1 f6 36 ♗d2 ♖h4 37 g3 ♖xh6 38 ♗d8 ♖g7 39 ♗ed1 g5 40 ♖a8 ♖f7 41 ♖b8 ♗xd8 42 ♗xd8 ♗g7 43 ♖c8 ♗e7 44 ♗d6 ♗d7 45 ♗xb6 ♗d1+ 46 ♗g2 ♖h5 0-1

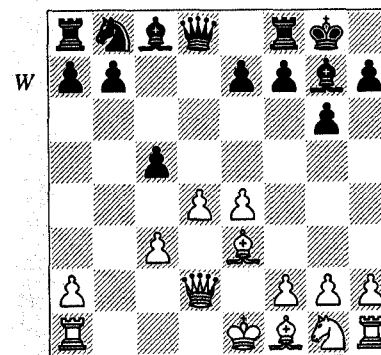
Game 6

Banikas – Rowson

Tallinn jr Ech 1997

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 e4 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 ♗g7 7 ♗e3 c5 8 ♖d2 0-0!? (D)

Please note that my principal recommendation is 8... ♖a5 here; see Chapter 7.



9 ♖f3

White could also try 9 ♗c1:

a) 9... ♖d7! is a way to respond with quick development, suggesting that moving two major pieces so early is too extravagant:

a1) 10 ♗d3 e5! may already be better for Black. 11 ♖f3 (11 d5 f5! looks more than adequate but it is necessary to play with some vigour; one idea is 12 f3 f4 13 ♗f2 ♖g5!?) 11...exd4 12 cxd4 cxd4 13 ♖xd4 ♖e5 14 ♗e2 ♖h4! was better for Black in Yusupov-Timman, Belgrade 1989.

a2) 10 ♖f3 ♖f6 11 ♗d3 ♖g4 (if White loses this dark-squared bishop his centre will always be very unstable) 12 ♗g5! is untried.

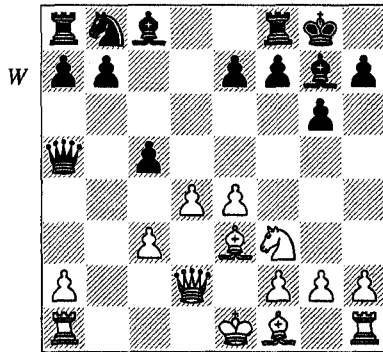
a3) 10 d5 ♖f6 11 f3 (to stop ...♖g4 and defend e4) 11...e6! (we have already seen this idea in the game Åkesson-Rowson; White is too under-developed to get away with taking on c5) 12 c4 ♗e8! (White wanted to play ♗d3 and then ♖e2, but this move messes up his plans due to the pin on the e-file) 13 ♖e2 b6 14 ♖c3 ♗a6 15 ♗e2 ♖d7! 16 0-0 ♖e5 gives Black good counterplay – B.Lalić.

a4) 10 ♗c4! e5 11 dxc5 ♖a5 and Black is better. It's not very important theoretically, but I want to draw your attention to Speelman-Zoler, London Lloyds Bank 1991, which featured a good example of what not to do as Black and why. After 10 ♗c4 Black played 10... ♖b8 11 ♖f3 b5! (this plan is not at all bad in itself but Black should have no illusions about queen-side pressure; for the moment attention should be directed exclusively towards the centre) 12 ♗d3 c4?. I've seen quite a lot of club players make

this push when playing the Grünfeld and it's important for the reader to know that **this is almost always a bad idea**. On the one hand it looks attractive to gain space with tempo but a much more important consideration is that it will now be extremely difficult to apply any serious pressure against White's centre. The rest of the game is a good demonstration of my comment in Chapter 1 about using the centre as a shield to allow you to attack elsewhere; there is no way White could get away with such aggression on the kingside if Black had the option of opening the centre at any stage: 13 ♖b1 ♜c7 14 ♙h6! e5 15 h4! ♙xh6 16 ♜xh6 f6 17 ♜e3 ♜f7 18 h5 ♙b7! 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 ♜h6 ♜g7 21 dxe5! ♟xe5 22 ♟xe5 ♜xe5 23 f4! ♜e8 24 e5! fxe5 25 f5 e4 26 ♙d1! gxf5 27 ♙d6! ♜e5 28 ♜h8+ ♟f7 29 ♜xb8 ♜g3+ 30 ♟d1 ♜g4+ 31 ♟c1 ♜g5+ 32 ♟b2 ♜xg2+ 33 ♙c2 ♜h1 34 ♜xb7+ ♟g8 35 ♜c8+ 1-0.

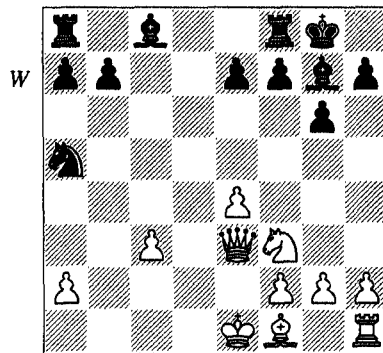
b) 9...♜a5!? could now be met by 10 d5 but White's play looks very artificial to me somehow and I suspect 10...e6 leaves Black with his full share of the chances, e.g. 11 ♟f3 (11 c4 ♜xd2+ 12 ♟xd2 leaves White somewhat over-extended; Black can set up with ...♟d7, ...♙b7, ...♜ae8 and ...f5 – but note that if Black's pawn were on a6 this ending would probably be better for White since the black queenside is much more fragile) 11...exd5 12 exd5 ♜e8 13 ♙e2 ♙f5 14 0-0 ♟d7 15 h3 ♟b6 16 g4 ♙d7 and Black is fully equal, Karpov-Kasparov, New York/Lyons Wch (13) 1990.

9...♜a5 (D)



10 ♜c1

10 ♜b1 is less accurate when Black has castled due to Adorjan's excellent idea of 10...♟c6! 11 ♜b5 cxd4 12 ♜xa5 dxe3 13 ♜xe3 ♟xa5 (D), when Black has full compensation for his slight material deficit in the form of piece-play, having no real weaknesses and the clear plan of attacking c3.



After 14 ♟d4 ♙d7 15 ♙e2 ♜fc8 16 0-0 ♟c4 17 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 I think Black is slightly better.

10...♟d7!?

I used to feel uncomfortable with the endings arising from the exchange on d4 but now I think they are fully OK for Black. This dinky little knight move is designed to keep the tension.

11 ♙d3

This is not a mistake, but 1997 World Junior Champion GM Tal Shaked later showed me that Black's opening strategy is not fully adequate after 11 d5! ♟f6 12 c4! ♜xd2+ 13 ♟xd2 when White's central control gives him the slightly better ending (this was originally Yermolinsky's idea).

I tried to improve with 11...♟b6 but after 12 c4 ♜xd2+ 13 ♟xd2! (covering c3) 13...f5 14 exf5 (Black was threatening ...f4) 14...♙xf5 15 ♙d3 ♟a4 16 ♙xf5 ♜xf5 17 ♟g5! White had a big endgame advantage and went on to win in Shaked-Rowson, London 1997.

11...♟b6 12 ♙h6!?

This makes good sense considering that Black's queen and knight are a long way from the kingside and it also prepares for Black's main idea of 12...♙g4, which would now be met by 13 ♙xg7 ♟xg7 14 ♟e5.

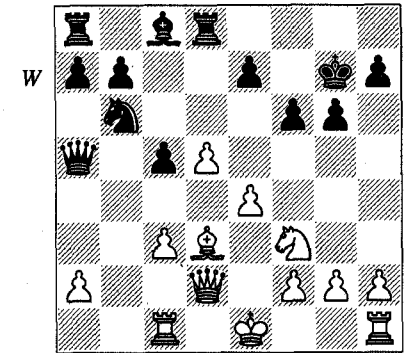
12...♜d8!

Pressurizing the centre and effectively obliging White to take on g7.

13 ♙xg7 ♟xg7 14 d5!?

I guess Banikas wanted to sever the links between the queenside pieces and the solitary black king. He may also have thought his potential attack on the kingside with h4-h5 was sufficiently dangerous that he now wanted to avoid an exchange of queens.

14...f6! (D)



A crucial defensive move to recapture some dark squares. The main point, however, is that 15 h4 can now be met fairly securely with 15...♙g4!.

15 c4!?

This may have been best now, because I think I was threatening ...c4 and ...e6.

15...♜xd2+ 16 ♟xd2 ♙d7!

Not 16...e5 immediately because of 17 ♟b3!, when I have to play 17...♟d7, losing some coordination. The bishop belongs on d7, and the knight on d6. Only by these means will Black be able to contain Delroy while remaining active.

17 f4 e5!

Voluntarily giving White a protected passed d-pawn in the secure knowledge that it will be safely blockaded.

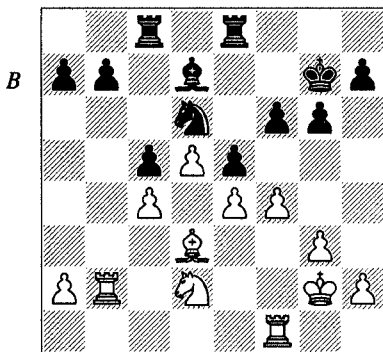
18 g3

This is very cautious. White might have considered ♟b3 at some point to force me to put a rook on c8, but I think I will always manage to play ...♜c7 and ...♟c8-d6 anyhow – so perhaps Banikas was correct to keep the position more stable.

18...♖c8 19 0-0

White could also consider forcing ...b6 with 19 ♖b3 so as to attack the queenside later with a4-a5.

19...♖d6 20 ♙c2 ♙e8 21 ♔g2 ♙ac8 22 ♙b2 (D)



With this move my opponent offered a draw. There's no doubt that Black has a slightly more pleasant position but had he accompanied his offer with another move I would have been hard-pressed to find any concrete way to increase the pressure.

22...b5!?

I suspected he had missed this move, though he later claimed to have been provoking it. It is slightly risky since now c5 can become weak in some lines but it's definitely the best winning chance I'm going to have in such a position.

23 ♙c1 a6!

Not the positionally desirable 23...b4 because after 24 a3! a5 25 ♙a1 I am beginning to have serious problems defending my queenside pawns.

24 ♙bc2 b4!

Ha, ha; a slight twist.

25 a3 bxa3!

Now there is no unpleasantness with ♙b6.

26 ♙c3 a5! 27 ♙xa3 a4 28 ♙c2 ♙b8!

I have managed to activate my forces without giving White any real counterplay, but it is still difficult to make serious headway.

29 ♙ca1 ♙b2!

This actually had to be seen when playing 24...b4 because otherwise my pawns are just dropping.

30 ♙1a2 ♙eb8 31 ♔f3 ♙xa2 32 ♙xa2 ♙b4

If I could activate my king somehow I might create serious winning chances but White always seems to have sufficient counterplay against c5 or e5, which prevents me from doing anything elaborate.

33 ♙d3 g5?!

I wanted to cut out the impending threat of ♔e3 followed by fxe5 and ♖f3 but as my opponent rightly pointed out, I have no real hope to win the game once the kingside is closed.

34 f5! ♔f8 35 ♔e3 ♔e7 36 ♙e2 ♔d8 1/2-1/2

Once White brings his king to c3 there is no entry for my king and so there is nothing to be done.

Game 7

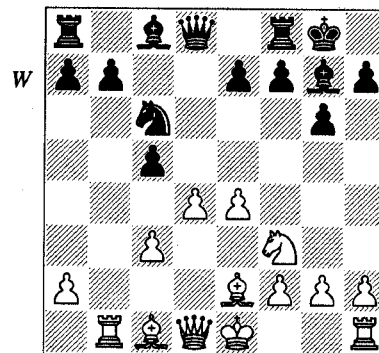
Wells - Rowson

London 1997

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 e4 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♖f3 c5 8 ♙b1!?

See Chapter 9.

8...0-0 9 ♙e2 ♖c6 (D)



I used to think that this was the best way to play against this line but now my general feeling is that it causes White far fewer problems than my recommendation given in Chapter 9. Basically I feel that it loses too much time and cedes too much space without achieving sufficient counterplay against the centre. Grünfeld experts such as Grandmasters Ftačnik, Stohl and Krasenkov still seem to advocate this approach for Black but it seems to me that the main lines of this system, whether Black later retreats his bishop to g7, h8 or c7, are hanging by a knife edge theoretically, and Black has to know copious amounts of theory just to survive.

10 d5 ♖e5

If Black could safely take on c3 here it would be a different story. However, after 10...♙xc3+ 11 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 12 ♙xd2 ♖a5 (12...♖d4 13 ♖xd4 cxd4 14 ♙xd4 leaves Black without any control of the centre, and a positionally

lost game) 13 h4! ♙g4 14 h5 ♙xf3 15 gxf3 e5 16 hxg6 fxg6 17 d6! it feels to me that there is a serious harmony deficit in the black position.

11 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 12 ♙d2

12 ♙c2 ♙d6! presents fewer problems. White's set-up with 12 ♙d2 may look awkward, but in many cases he will play c4 and ♙b2 when he will coordinate very effectively.

12...♙g7!?

Although I am generally dissatisfied with this line for Black, I was attracted to this clever idea of Ftačnik's. To understand its significance fully, one must be closely acquainted with the various move-orders in the main lines, but its principal idea can be seen in the game.

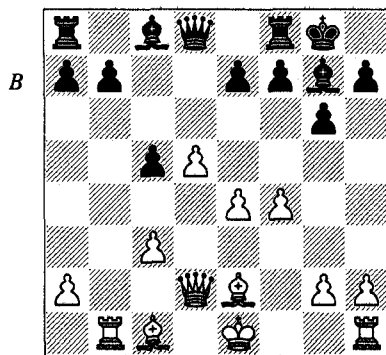
I have also tried 12...e6 13 f4 ♙c7!? with the aim of preventing c4 and therefore messing up the white structure. There seem to be many promising ways that White can try to take advantage of the absence of the bishop from the black kingside but the line that seems particularly problematic to my mind is 14 0-0 exd5 15 exd5 ♙a5 16 ♙a3 b6 17 ♙b5!? to be followed by ♙xa5 and c4, when Black is likely to be left with weak pawns and a weak king. This seems to provide excellent compensation for the exchange. My thanks to GM Bogdan Lalić who recently told me of this idea.

13 f4 (D)

13 0-0 e6; 13 c4!?

13...e5!?

Targeting a different part of the pawn-chain allows Black more breathing space than the normal ...e6 idea



but I don't see an obvious improvement on my play from this game and so I am not recommending this line, but rather showing the game for its instructional value.

14 0-0!

This good move cost my opponent dearly on the clock, but he was right to avoid 14 dxe6 ♗xe6 15 ♖xb7 ♜xd2+ 16 ♗xd2 ♜fb8!, when Black has good chances in the endgame.

14...exf4

Otherwise White may well play f5.

15 ♜xf4 ♜e7

I played this solid move very quickly but perhaps I should have taken my chance to grab some material since I soon run into serious trouble. However, after 15...♗xc3!? 16 ♗b2!?, 16...♗d4+ 17 ♗xd4 cxd4 18 ♜e5 seems to leave Black unable to gain any control of the centre, while 16...♗xb2 17 ♖xb2 also looks very promising for White, so maybe the whole thing is bad after all!

16 ♗c4!

Targeting f7. Black's problem is what to do with the bishop on c8; one of the reasons I don't like the ...♘c6

line generally is that it doesn't question the placement of the rook on b1 and often forces Black to play ...b6 and then develop the queen's bishop rather passively.

16...♗e5

I have to try to blockade on the dark squares and hope that I can mobilize before being blown apart.

17 ♜g5!

Trying to remove Black's best defender and taking advantage of the trick set up by the last move.

17...♜d6

17...f6? 18 d6+.

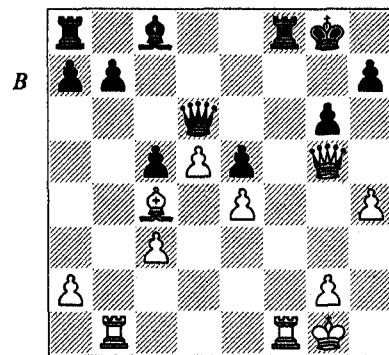
18 ♗f4!

If Black were better developed such an exchange would tend to be favourable for him because the central pawns are fixed on light squares, but here I have great difficulty holding off an immediate central onslaught.

18...f6

Anything else would lead to the opening of the sluice gates, but it seems that my position is lost in any case.

19 ♗xe5 fxe5 20 h4! (D)

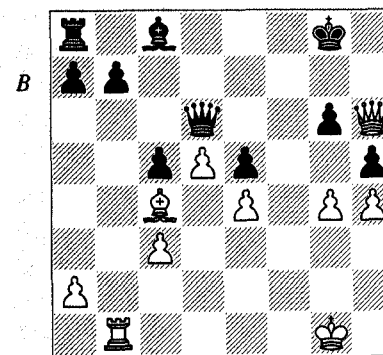


Compare each piece in turn, and then try to find something positive to say about the black position. The best I could do at the time was consider whether I had any winning chances in a bishop ending, but even that didn't seem likely. Black is losing not because of the structure in itself, but because of the relative mobilization of the forces. If I had two moves, ...b6 and ...♗d7, I would not be worse, but White is playing too powerfully to allow any such respite.

20...h5

20...b6 21 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 22 h5 ♗d7 23 ♖f1+ ♔g7 24 h6+ ♔h8 25 ♖f6 ♜e7 26 d6 ♜e8 27 ♖f7 ♜d8 28 ♜xe5+ is an example of Delroy's latent influence.

21 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 22 ♜h6+ ♔g8 23 g4! (D)



A deadly move, carving up my kingside.

23...b5

The only try, but my opponent again found the best move.

24 g5!

Trapping his own queen and leaving the bishop *en prise*, but the threat of ♖f1-f6 is ample justification.

24...♗h3

It must be stopped, but now infiltration is imminent...

25 ♖xb5 ♗d8 26 ♖b7 ♗d7

My opponent has played perfectly up to now, but was desperately short of time. More clinical would now have been 27 ♖xa7, which is a beautiful zugzwang; d6+ or ♖xd7 and d6+ cannot be averted and I would have had to resign.

27 ♗b5 c4

A glimmer of hope; Her Majesty can breathe for the first time.

28 ♖xd7??

Lack of time causes a major blunder, after any king move White wins easily.

28...♜b6+ 29 ♔g2 ♖xd7 30 ♗xd7 ♜b2+ 31 ♔f1 ♜c1+ 1/2-1/2

A perpetual out of nowhere. Notice how ineffective the queen was as a blockader, and yet how completely effective she was when she became active.

Game 8

Shirov - Leko

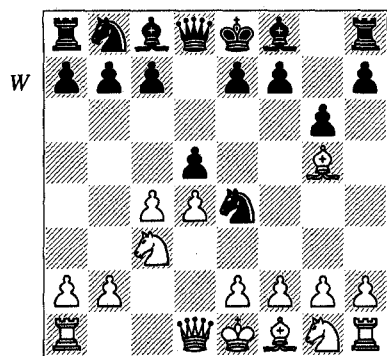
London Lloyds Bank 1991

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5

Indirectly attacking d5 is a very forthright way to fight for the centre (see Chapters 10 and 11), but the drawback is that Black can immediately fight back.

4...♘e4! (D)

5 ♗f4



a) 5 $\text{dxe4?!$ dxe4 leaves White with trouble developing and a funny-looking bishop stuck on g5 . IM Colin Crouch tried 6 Wa4+ against me at the 1997 British Championship, but after 6... $\text{Wd7!?$ 7 Wxd7+ Qxd7 8 0-0-0 g7 9 f3 h6! 10 e3 e5! 11 d5 f5! I had a good position and went on to win.

b) 5 cxd5 is too clever for its own good. 5... Qxg5 6 h4 Qe4 7 Qxe4 Wxd5 8 Qc3 Wa5 is at least equal for Black, who has the two bishops and little to fear from White's h-pawn.

c) 5 e4 is a serious alternative, but then 5... Qxc3 6 bxc3 dxc4! offers Black good prospects as White cannot win the pawn back conveniently and the bishop on h4 looks a bit vague. 7 e3 (7 e4 c5 8 Qxc4 g7 is a bizarre exchange variation where the c1 -bishop ventured not only to g5 , but h4 , from where it cannot return to e3 to support the centre; 7 Wa4+ Wd7! will probably transpose to Lautier-Ivanchuk in Chapter 11) 7... e6 8 Wb1 (8 $\text{Wb1!?$ was tried by Topalov in 1994, but it looks fairly experimental and he hasn't played this line since) 8... b6 9

Qf3 g7 generally leads to a complex middlegame where Black will lose c4 but coordinate in time to apply pressure with ... c5 . One example: 10 Qd2 0-0 11 Wf3 d5 12 e4 b7 13 We3 c5 , with approximate equality in a typical Grünfeld position, Zaiats-Krupkova, Frydek Mistek 1996.

5... Qxc3 6 bxc3 dxc4

I think Leko had just turned twelve when this game was played, so we'll forgive him this slight inaccuracy. I think it's better to play 6... g7 here, as explained in Chapter 10.

7 e4!

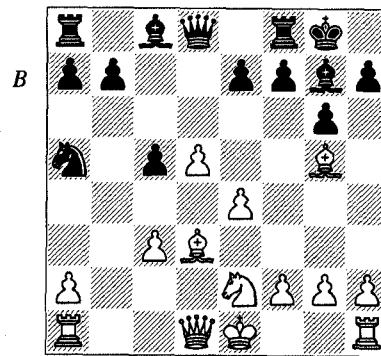
It seems that this move allows White to reach a position similar to the main-line Exchange Variation but with an extra move.

7... c5 8 Qxc4 g7 9 Qe2 Qc6 10 d5

Normally in this position the bishop would still be on c1 and Black would play ... Qe5 , but here this would give White total control: after 10... Qe5 11 Qxe5 Qxe5 12 f4 g7 13 e5 it seems unlikely that Black will find sufficient counterplay.

10... Qa5 11 d3 0-0 12 g5! (D)

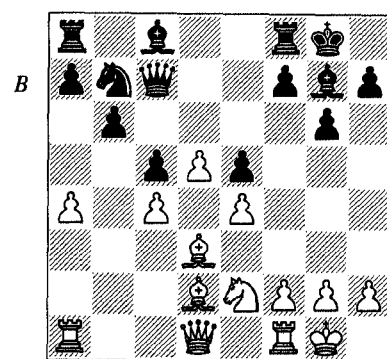
Quite an instructive move, not uncommon in the Grünfeld. Shirov appreciates that Black wants to move his e-pawn, and also knows that he would like his f-pawn to be free to move to f4 if the position required. Moreover, as we will see, the bishop wants to go to d2 but first he makes the black queen go to c7 , which may not look like a disastrous square but is actually sub-optimal for the structure that soon arises.



12... Wc7 13 0-0 e5

13... $\text{e6!?$ 14 Wb1 also looks better for White, but this would probably be more unsettling for Shirov, for as we will see the game continuation is much easier for White to play.

14 c4 b6 15 d2 Qb7 16 a4! (D)



Although I was also young when I watched the post-mortem of this game, I remember being surprised that Leko didn't just stop all White's queenside play with 16... a5 , when it seemed clear to me that White could never seriously hope to cause grief to the b6 -pawn and

that Black may even claim to be better once he gets his play going with ... f5-f4 , etc. I also remember Leko quizzically suggesting that the knight should have stayed on a5 and though I can't remember exactly why, Shirov did not look impressed. I guess he felt that this knight belongs on d6 and that White can always arrange to bring a knight to b3 to shift the knight from a5 if need be. Taking on a5 with the bishop is also possible but then White has to be sure that Black won't land a rook on b4 .

At any rate, I wish I had mustered the courage to ask them what was going on at the time because even now, having seen the course of the game, I think 16... a5 should definitely have been considered. One thing that is clear to me now, however, is that after 16... a5 White should not let Black play ... f5-f4 , for then White would be left without a convincing plan (if White tries to play Qb5 Black takes it with his bishop from d7). Instead, White should prepare to meet ... f5 with exf5 and then somehow pressurize Black's centre, while if Black doesn't play ... f5 , White should slowly prepare to play f4 . I think I shared the illusion that Leko had at the time, namely that Black was only a couple of moves from having a dangerous kingside attack. Still, let's consider 16... a5 more closely; it will help us understand these structures.

Most of the time, the pawn-structure should be thought of in terms of the scope it provides for the pieces, but there are also moments when you should just imagine how things would

look without the pieces and in this case you would have to ask: "What have I done to my pawns?" Without Delroy and the black b-pawn, let's call him Billy for now, the structure would be symmetrical. And yet if we then compare Delroy to Billy we can see that one is a central protected passed pawn and the other is a backward b-pawn. If this thought alone weren't enough to dissuade you from the move 16...a5, consider that you have given away one of only two pawn-breaks. Moreover, you should know that although b6 is not immediately vulnerable, as long as there are major pieces on the board it will always be more than a minor target.

16...♙d7 17 a5 ♞d6 18 ♛c3 f5 19 ♜e1!

A good solid move, over-protecting e4 and providing a defensive haven for the bishop on f1.

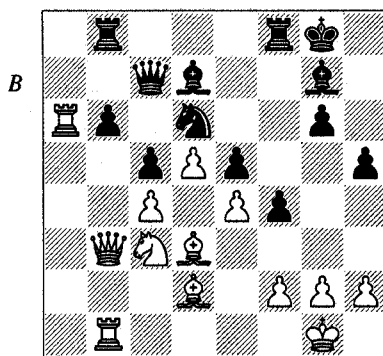
19...f4

Note that in such positions Black would generally prefer to have his queen actively placed on the kingside. As it is, there are no real threats there and nothing to stop Shirov breaking through on the queenside.

20 ♜b3 h5 21 ♜eb1 ♜ab8 22 axb6 axb6 23 ♜a6 (D)

The logical culmination of White's play; Black was simply too slow on the kingside. The time spent on ...♞c6-a5-b7-d6 turned out to be too costly on this occasion.

23...b5 24 ♞xb5 ♙xb5 25 cxb5 c4 26 ♜b4! ♞xb5 27 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 28 ♙xc4 ♞d4 29 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 30 h4 ♜h7 31 ♙a5 ♜c8 32 d6! ♜xc4 33 d7 ♞e2+



34 ♙f1 ♜d4 35 d8 ♜ ♜xd8 36 ♙xd8 ♞d4 37 f3 1-0

I think this game shows that Black should be very careful about entering into this fixed structure, because unless serious counterplay is readily available with ...f5 or ...b5, he can easily be squashed.

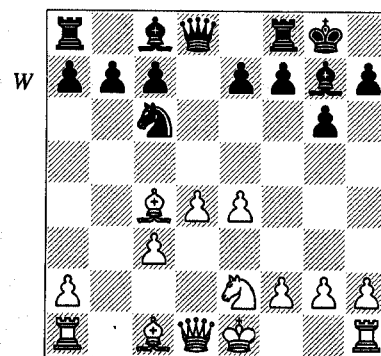
Game 9

Nenashev – Alapbergenov

Bishkek Z 1993

1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♞xd5 5 e4 ♞xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♙c4 0-0 8 ♞e2 ♞c6 (D)

This is a very reasonable alternative to the main lines. In general Black wants to complete development before attacking the centre, normally with ...b6, ...♙b7, ...♜d7, ...♞a5, ...e5, ...c5 in various different sequences. If my recommendations in Chapter 6 run into theoretical difficulties at some stage I suggest taking another look at this approach, for which White tends to be less prepared. That said, there are many reasons, which will become clear in



the course of this game, why I do not think these lines are wholly adequate as your main-stay defence to the ♙c4 lines. The first noteworthy reason is that White can play 8 ♙e3, instead of 8 ♞e2, which Korchnoi and Shirov have been known to use. This allows White to meet an early ...b6 with some sharper ideas often including the move ♜f3 and after 8...♞c6, 9 ♞f3! makes ...e5 ideas less appealing for Black, e.g. 8 ♙e3!? ♞c6 9 ♞f3 e5 10 d5 ♞a5 11 ♙e2 ♙g4 12 ♞d2!.

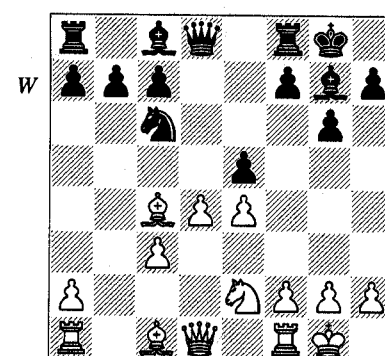
9 0-0 e5 (D)

The reason this approach is plausible in the ♙c4 lines is that White exerts little control over e5, and d5 is a move White doesn't really want to play because it blocks the c4-bishop and White will lose a tempo after ...♞a5.

9...b6!? is also theoretically respectable.

10 ♙e3

I think this is one of many promising approaches for White since Black can be forced to play a couple of only semi-useful moves in order to force



the structure Black desires after White pushes with d5. Black wants this structure because it allows him to break in the centre with ...c6 or ...f5 in relative peace. Otherwise:

a) 10 d5 ♞a5 is also possible:

a1) After 11 ♙d3 Black seems to have two reasonable approaches:

a11) 11...b6!? 12 c4 ♞b7 13 ♞c3 ♙d7 14 ♙c2 f5 15 ♙a4 ♜f7 16 ♙a3 ♞d6 17 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 18 c5 ♞xe4 19 ♞xe4 fxe4 1/2-1/2 Razuvaev-Stohl, Burgas 1992.

a12) 11...c6 12 c4 b5!? – immediate detonation! There are many variations on the following sharp line, but I have reasonable faith in Black's prospects, though he must improve over 13 cxb5 cxd5 14 ♙a3 ♜e8 15 ♞c3 ♙b7 16 ♙b4 ♞c4 17 ♜e2 ♞b6 18 a4 f5 19 ♜ad1 ♜h4 20 g3 ♜h3 21 a5 d4 22 axb6 dxc3 23 ♙c4+ ♜h8 24 ♜d7 with an advantage for White, Rashkovsky-Ermolinsky, Aktiubinsk 1985.

a2) However, when I was preparing this line it seemed that 11 ♙b3!? was a surprisingly annoying and rather clever move. The bishop looks passive

here but White switches on to the fact that Black will have to play ...b6 or ...c6 at some stage and then the bishop will be brought to life. It also encourages Black to gain the two bishops, which are not much use in such a closed position; the knight's role as a blockader is more important. 11...b6 12 c4 ♖e7 13 ♙e3 ♘b7 14 ♙a4! ♘c5 15 ♙c6 ♚b8 16 ♘c3 f5 17 f3 fxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 fxe4 ♚xf1 + 20 ♚xf1 ♙a6 21 ♙b5 ♚f8 22 ♚d3 ♙xb5 23 cxb5 ♚f7 24 a4 was slightly better for White in Arakhamia-Akopian, Moscow GMA 1989.

b) My main reason for warning you off this system, however, is 10 ♙a3!, which seems to place great demands on Black after 10...♚e8 11 ♙xf7+! ♘xf7 12 ♚b3+:

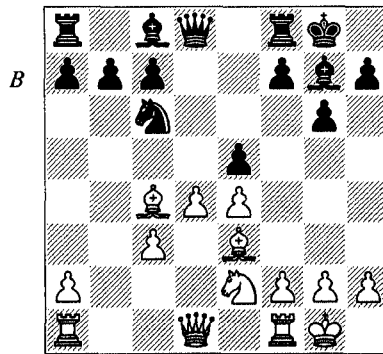
b1) 12...♘f6!? turned out well for Black in one game, but I never fully believed in Black's position and White has numerous possible improvements. 13 f4 ♙h6 14 fxe5+ (14 d5!?) 14...♘g7 15 ♚f6 (15 h3!?, 15 e6!?) 15...♙g4! 16 ♚f7+ ♘h8 17 ♚xb7 ♘xe5! 18 ♚xc7! ♘d7 19 ♙d6 ♚c8 20 ♘g3 ♚xc7 21 ♙xc7 ♚g5 22 h3 ♚e3+ 23 ♘h2 ♚xc3 24 ♚f1 and Black is over the worst, Topalov-Tukmakov, Palma de Mallorca 1992.

b2) 12...♙e6 13 d5 ♘a5 14 dxe6+ ♚xe6 15 ♚a4 c6 16 ♚ad1 ♚c7 17 c4! with the idea of ♘c1, as suggested by Tukmakov; Black's position is by no means full of song.

We return to 10 ♙e3 (D):

10...♚e7 11 d5

11 f3! seems slightly more challenging, since Black probably has to



play 11...♚d8 and after 12 d5 ♘a5 13 ♙d3 b6 14 c4 we can see that the rook would rather be on f8, supporting the ...f5 push.

11...♘a5 12 ♙d3 c5

So here we are again, but this time Delroy will not be on the winning team.

12...b6!? also looks playable. Indeed it's well worth paying close attention to anything that Ftačnik and Stohl do in the Grünfeld since both GMs have been life-long devotees: 13 ♚d2 ♙d7 14 ♚ac1 ♘b7 15 f4 ♙h6 16 ♚ce1 ♘c5 17 fxe5 ♙xe3+ 18 ♚xe3 ♚xe5 19 ♘d4 ♚ae8 20 ♚d2 f6 21 ♙c2 ♚d6 22 ♘f3 ♙g4 23 ♘d4 ♙d7 24 ♘f3 was equal in Tisdall-Stohl, Gausdal Arnold Cup 1991.

13 f4

13 c4!? b6 (♙d2 was a positional threat; the knight needs an escape square) 14 ♙d2 ♘b7 15 a4 ♘d6 16 a5 b5! 17 cxb5 c4 (note that this idea would not be possible if the queen were on c7 due to ♚c1) 18 ♙c2 ♘xb5 gives Black active play.

13...exf4 14 ♙xf4 ♙d7 15 ♚d2

White can try to prevent ...b5 but then Black can hit back in the centre: 15 ♚b1 ♚ae8 (15...f5?! 16 d6 ♚e8 17 exf5 ♙xf5 18 ♙xf5 ♚xf5 19 d7 ♚e7 20 ♙c7, winning, shows Delroy at his best) 16 ♚d2 f5!.

15...b5

15...f5 would again be an error since White is fully prepared: 16 ♚ae1 fxe4 17 ♘g3 with a clear advantage. Notice that challenging in the centre tends to be a bad idea when Black's forces are so scattered.

16 ♚ab1

16 ♚ae1 looks more threatening but then Black would just try to hold the centre with 16...♚fe8!?. Since Black has no intention of playing ...f5 here, it is better to leave the queen's rook to support the queenside pawns.

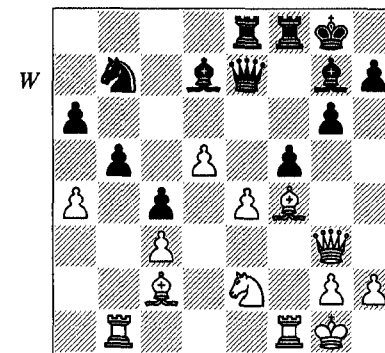
16...a6 17 ♚e3 ♘b7!

Improving the worst-placed piece.

18 ♚g3

18 e5 ♚ae8 19 a4 ♙xe5 20 axb5 axb5 is equal; 18 a4 c4 19 ♙c2 ♚ae8 is similar to the game.

18...♚ae8 19 a4 c4 20 ♙c2 f5! (D)



Note that Black fully mobilized his forces in the centre before this break, which now has considerable force.

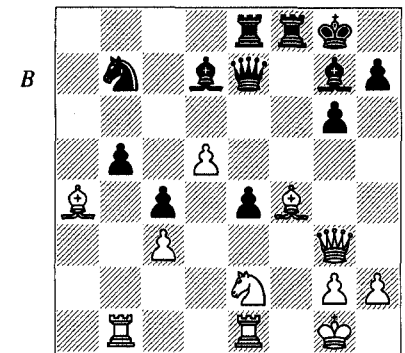
21 axb5 axb5 22 ♚fe1 fxe4

White has been outplayed, and has lost the battle for the centre. Where exactly did he go wrong?

After f4 he didn't have a useful pawn-break and therefore didn't have a plan; although he prevented ...f5 for a while, he should have persisted. I think he may have been relying on the following idea but such decentralization is always suspicious, and White is duly punished.

23 ♙a4 (D)

If 23 ♚bd1, 23...♚f7 keeps control.



The following sacrifice is a vivid example of the importance and power of a fully coordinated army:

23...♚xf4!

23...♚c5+ is much less spirited. After 24 ♙e3 ♚xd5 25 ♚ed1 ♚f5 26 ♚c7 White is still in the game.

24 ♚xf4

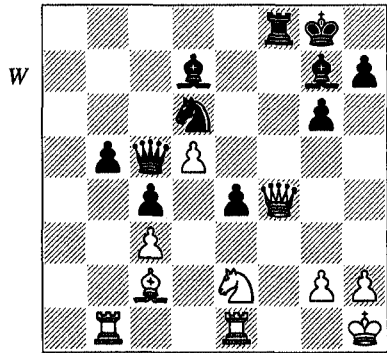
24 ♘xf4 doesn't change much: 24...♚c5+ 25 ♘h1 ♘d6 26 ♙c2 ♘f5

27 ♖g5 ♗h6 28 ♖g4 ♖f2 and again Black's coordination is awesome.

24...♖c5+ 25 ♖h1

25 ♖f2 e3 26 ♖g3 ♗d6 offers no respite.

25...♗d6 26 ♗c2 ♖f8 (D)



Personally, I find the harmony in Black's position absolutely delicious. Every black piece is operating at almost maximum capacity and performs an important role, whereas White's pieces resemble indifferent couch potatoes.

27 ♖h4

27 ♖g5 ♗f6 keeps the momentum. But notice that Black has no interest in taking the d-pawn, which would effectively turn the TV off and encourage

the white pieces to do something. Black is looking for dark-square infiltration and ...♗f5-e3 is a major idea.

27...♗f5 28 ♖g4 ♖f7 29 ♗xe4

29 ♖xe4 loses to 29...♗e3 30 ♖a1 ♗f5 31 ♖a8+ ♗f8.

29...♗d6!

A swanky switch-back which effectively ends the game. I suppose we could say that White's queen was out doing the shopping when the rest were watching TV and this move tickles her ribs as she comes in with the shopping bags.

30 ♖h4 ♗f6 31 ♖f4 ♗xc3 32 ♖h4 ♗f6 33 ♖f4 g5 34 ♖f3 ♗e5 35 ♗xh7+

Acknowledging that the queen was over-loaded, but it's too late.

35...♖xh7 36 g3 ♗f5 0-1

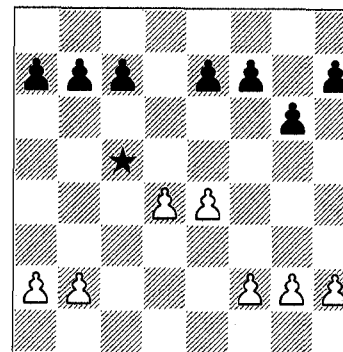
Conclusion

The white d-pawn is an important strategic feature of most Grünfeld positions. This pawn can be passed, dangerous and cramping or weak, isolated and vulnerable. In general, the knight is the best blockader of such a pawn, but Black must be careful not to be too satisfied with such a blockade because Delroy can offer structural and spatial advantages as well.

4 Side-Steps

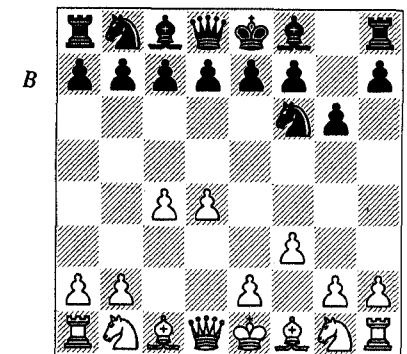
"Discovery consists in seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what nobody has thought." – Albert Szent

In the following games we examine variations where White tries to build a pawn-centre while preventing (or discouraging) the capture ...♗d5xc3. In most of these cases the knight retreats to b6 and it is difficult for Black to play ...c7-c5 as White would then capture with a tempo gained on the knight on b6 and in most cases he will also control the c5-square with his bishop on e3. The drawback of these lines for White is that it further delays his lagging development and so Black does best to attack the centre as quickly as possible with ...♗c6 or ...e5, allowing White to gain as much central space as he likes early on provided, of course, that Black can hit back in due course with the necessary pawn-breaks.



Game 10 Ward – Liss Isle of Man 1997

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3 (D)



This is an anti-Grünfeld line with which White hopes to show that disallowing ...♗xc3 will leave Black with too many pieces and too little space. If your opponent plays the Sämisch variation against the King's Indian but seems unsure of what to play against the Grünfeld then there is a good chance that he/she will try this line as the theory is relatively unestablished and Black has to play very accurately to achieve counterplay against the centre.

3...d5!

Don't be discouraged!

4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 e4 ♖b6 6 ♖c3 ♗g7
7 ♗e3 0-0 8 ♖d2

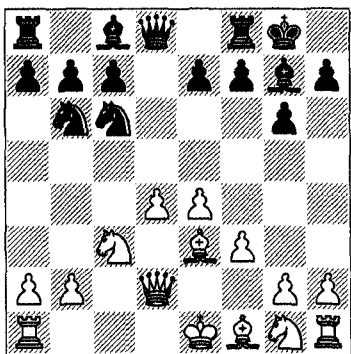
Or:

a) 8 ♗c1 ♖c6 9 d5 ♖e5 10 ♗d4 c6!
11 f4 ♖g4 12 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 13 ♗e2 e5!
and if 14 ♗xg4, then 14...♖h4+.

b) 8 f4 is the next game.

8...♖c6 (D)

8...e5 was Shirov's choice in his decisive match-game with Kramnik but most commentators agree that White's position from the opening was at least quite promising and some recent games have confirmed this. After 9 d5 c6 10 h4 h5!? 11 ♗e2 cxd5 12 exd5 ♖d8d7 13 d6 ♖f6 14 ♗g5 Black should play 14...♗e6 but after 15 ♖h3 ♗c8 16 ♖f2 ♖c4 17 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 18 ♖fe4 ♖xe4 19 ♖xe4 f6 20 ♗e3 b6 21 0-0 White was somewhat better in Ward-Knott, British Ch (Torquay) 1998.



9 0-0-0

9 ♗d1 is a solid alternative:

a) 9...e5 is Black's main reply, when 10 d5 ♖d4 11 ♖b5 appeals to

solid players looking for a slight edge due to the inactivity of the g7-bishop and the possibility of pressure against c7. Then:

a1) Black could try the solid continuation 11...♖xb5 12 ♗xb5 ♗d7 13 ♗xd7 ♖c4! when the position after 14 ♖e2 ♖xe3 15 ♖xe3 ♖xd7 16 ♖e2 f5, intending ...♗f7 and ...♗f8-d6, is about equal.

a2) 11...c5!? is a much more positive approach and after 12 dxc6 bxc6 (12...♖e7!? was my interpretation of the position before I knew any of the theory; Giulian-Rowson, Irvine 1995 continued 13 ♗d3?! bxc6 14 ♖xd4 exd4 15 ♗g5 f6 16 ♗f4 c5 17 b3 ♗e6 18 ♖e2 g5! 19 ♗g3 f5! 20 0-0 f4 21 ♗f2 ♖d7! and Black had complete control) 13 ♖xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗e6 Black's lead in development and possibilities to attack on the queenside leave him at least equal, though he must play energetically and not allow White to consolidate.

b) 9...f5!? also looks playable. Indeed I would even recommend this move ahead of 9...e5 because White's set-up only seems to make sense as a prophylactic measure against the ...e5 and ...♖d4 plan and after 9...f5 White may even be struggling to equalize. Note that once again White's king is a long way from castling and it is difficult for White to complete his development, e.g. 10 ♖ge2? ♖c4; 10 ♖h3 fxe4 11 fxe4 ♗xh3 12 gxh3 e5. 10 h4 is possible but then White should have castled instead of playing ♗d1. So this looks like a promising idea for Black

but I recommend looking at 9...e5 too for it leads to some fairly typical Grünfeld positions.

9...f5!

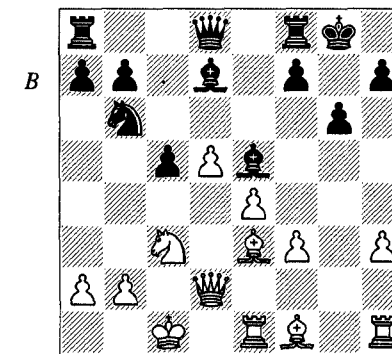
Grandmaster Liss was thoroughly displeased with this game and apparently told Ward in the post-mortem that he only played 9...f5 because he had tried 9...e5 against Bykhovsky a few months previously and had concluded that White was simply better and more generally that 3 f3 was a serious pain for the Grünfeld player. I hope to demonstrate that Liss's pessimism was ill-conceived but I do agree that things are not so simple for Black after the normal recommendation of 9...e5. Then after 10 d5 ♖d4, White has a pleasant choice:

a) 11 h4!? is possible but relatively unexplored.

b) 11 ♖b5!? is thought to be harmless but Hungarian GM Varga always seems to gain at least a nibble for White, and Black has few winning chances: 11...♖xb5 (11...c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♖xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗e6 17 a3! is inadequate for Black – the king is well placed on c1, protecting the b2-pawn) 12 ♗xb5 ♗d7 13 ♗e2 c6 14 dxc6 ♗xc6 15 ♖xd8 ♗fxd8 16 ♖h3 when I suppose he would claim that his pieces, including his king, are slightly more actively placed than Black's.

c) 11 f4! c5 12 fxe5 ♗g4 13 ♗e1 ♗xe5 14 h3 ♗d7 (14...♖h4!? is very annoying for White, but very risky for Black; if the line stood or fell by this move then I'd say more but the other two lines are also problems so we

needn't delve too deeply) 15 ♖f3 ♖xf3 16 gxf3 (D).

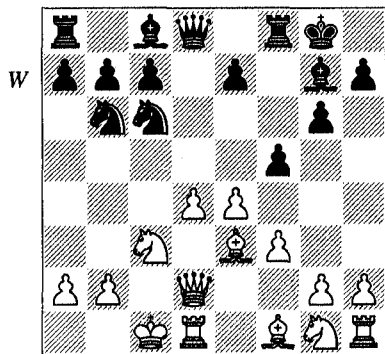


Now ECO just gives 16...♖e7 with a slight advantage to Black but I don't think that's true, especially if we remember our test for the likely success of the Grünfeld depends on central control and here White has greater control and occupation. Furthermore, after he plays 17 h4 Black really has to reply with 17...h5 to slow down the kingside attack, after which the ...f5 pawn-break becomes too weakening. More generally it is difficult to engineer any sort of queenside attack to counter White's plan of a slow central build-up. The only new idea I saw in these sort of positions was to play ...a6 followed by ...♗b5 at some stage but I feel this is tinkering around the edges and won't provide sufficient counterplay.

16...♗e8 was played by in Bykhovsky-Liss, Tel-Aviv 1996 and this seems to be a better move because the queen can also go to f6, but the essential nature of the position doesn't change;

Black still less control of the centre. The game continued 17 h4 ♖f6 18 ♗e2 h5 19 ♗g5 ♜g7 20 ♗f4 ♗d4 21 ♖b1 ♜ac8 22 ♜c1 a6 23 ♗e3 ♗f6 and now 24 ♜hg1 with the idea of 24...♗xh4 25 f4 looks promising for White.

Returning to the position after 9...f5 (D):



10 h4

This seems to be the most dangerous move. Others:

a) 10 ♗b5 fxe4 11 fxe4 ♗g4 12 ♗ge2 e5 looks thematic and strong for Black. 10 ♗b5 is a necessarily hesitant move because White generally doesn't want to take on c6 due to the weakness of the c4-square.

b) 10 e5 is a deceptively dangerous move and may prove to be the critical test of 9...f5. It is tempting to write the move off because White now fixes the structure and gives Black the glorious d5 outpost but White can argue that he has shut out both black bishops and has the clear plan of h4-h5 and a good square for his knight on f4. His cheeks may also turn slightly rosy at the

thought that he has more space and that his rooks are likely to be more effective than their counterparts, which, by the way, is often the main advantage of having more space.

b1) 10...♗e6 loses to 11 d5.

b2) 10...e6 looks much too passive in view of 11 h4!.

b3) I actually think Black is compelled to play 10...♖b4! but it looks more than adequate:

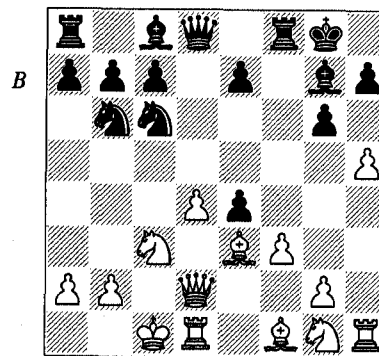
b31) Firstly it seems that the dangerous-looking 11 d5!? is OK for Black after 11...♗xe5 12 a3 ♗xc3 13 bxc3 ♖4xd5 14 ♗xb6 (14 c4 ♖xe3 15 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 16 ♜xd8+ ♖f7 17 c5 ♗e6) 14...axb6 15 ♜xd5+ ♜xd5 16 ♜xd5 ♗e6 17 ♜e5 ♜xa3! so White is probably advised to play a 'normal' eleventh move.

b32) 11 ♗h6. It may seem strange to exchange off Black's passive bishop but White really has to find a plan and it seems the only idea available is to try to attack the black king somehow. However, Black seems to have it covered: 11...♗xh6! (decentralizing the white queen) 12 ♜xh6 e6 13 h4 ♜e7 and Black will follow up with ...♗d7-c6, and ...♜g7 if necessary and White will have no real activity to show for his structural defects.

b33) 11 h4!? ♖4d5 12 h5 f4! and note that after 13 ♗f2 Black should play 13...♖xc3! 14 bxc3 ♗e6 because after any other thirteenth move White may play ♖e4, making the b6-knight a superfluous piece (i.e. it also wants to be on d5 and is therefore underperforming on b6 because d5 is already occupied).

10...fxe4 11 h5 (D)

After 11 fxe4 e5! 12 d5 ♖d4 intending ...♗g4 Black has completed his development harmoniously.



11...exf3?

This was not a good day out for GM Liss, who normally plays the Grünfeld very well. It was difficult to see White's clever finish but had Black reminded himself that the lifeblood of the Grünfeld is to develop quickly and attack the centre he might have preferred 11...e5!, which I think is an important improvement for Black. Not only does this move contribute to the fight for the centre but it enables Black to come to the aid of his king. It is also fully in accordance with the classical chess principle that an advance on the wing is best met by a counter in the centre. Now it seems that White should play 12 d5 ♖d4 13 hxg6 but after 13...hxg6 he is at an important crossroads. Perhaps he should try 14 ♗h6 but after 14...♜e7 or 14...e3!? I strongly believe that Black has his full share of the chances.

12 hxg6 hxg6 13 ♖xf3 ♜d6 14 ♗h6 ♗f5 15 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 16 d5 ♖e5 17 ♜h6+

I guess Liss probably thought that White could not do better than to give a perpetual, but there was a hole in his analysis.

17...♖f6 18 ♜h4+ ♖g7 19 ♜h7+ ♖f6 20 ♜h4+ ♖g7 21 ♜h6+ ♖f6 22 ♜g5+ ♖g7 23 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 24 g4!

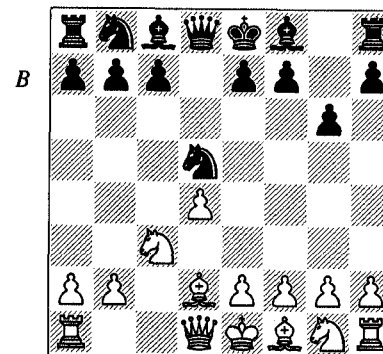
Winning a piece – this was a difficult one to see from afar. I presume that it was only due to time-trouble that it took White another twenty moves to win.

Game 11

Kacheishvili – Svidler

Szeged U-18 Wch 1994

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 ♗d2 (D)



Smyslov was fond of this prosaic system, so it should be treated with respect. White intends to recapture with the bishop on c3, when his centre will be secure and the ...e5 and ...c5 pawnbreaks will be less effective. Therefore

Black should generally retreat the knight to b6.

5...♗g7

5...♖b6 intending a later ...c5 is also possible but I prefer to continue developing until I'm forced to stop.

6 e4 ♖b6!

Not 6...♖xc3 7 ♗xc3 0-0 8 ♖d2 ♖d7 9 ♖f3, when clearly there is not enough pressure on the centre.

7 ♗e3

After 7 ♖f3 the d-pawn is 'hot' so I advise the 'cool' 7...0-0 with a likely transposition, which would no doubt please GM Paul Motwani!

7...0-0 8 ♗e2

This is one of many approaches but is made to look somewhat dubious after Svidler's energetic appraisal of the black position. Others:

a) 8 h3?! f5! 9 exf5 ♗xf5 10 ♖f3 ♖c6 intending ...e5 looks fully adequate.

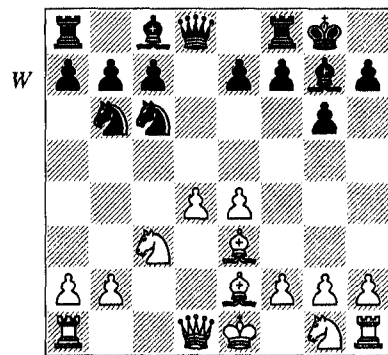
b) 8 a4?! a5! again with ideas of ...♖c6 and ...f5 and the b4 outpost as a bonus.

c) 8 ♖f3 ♗g4 9 ♗e2 ♖c6 is a transposition.

d) 8 f4 is more critical and now after 8...♖c6! 9 d5 I recommend 9...♖b8 (this gives White fewer chances to seize the initiative than 9...♖a5). 10 a4 is the main move here and this is directed against the threat of 10...c6, which Black would play against the natural 10 ♖f3 but would now leave Black rather passively placed (10...c6 11 a5 ♖d6 12 e5!). Therefore Black should hit the centre with 10...e5! 11 a5 (11 fxe5 ♗xe5 12 ♖f3 ♗g4 13 ♖d2 ♗xf3 14 gxf3 c6 15 a5 ♖c8 16

♗c4 ♖d6 17 ♗b3 ♖d7 gave Black a very active position in Gheorghiu-Ftačnik, Palma de Mallorca 1989) 11...♖d6 12 ♖f3 ♖e7! (12...♗e8 is also possible but I prefer to keep f7 over-protected in the event of the f-file opening). Black now intends ...exf4 and occupation of e5, e.g. 13 ♗d3 exf4 14 ♗xf4 ♖e5 15 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 17 0-0 ♖d7 18 ♖c1 ♖d4+ 19 ♖h1 ♖e5 leaves Black in control, Pilnick-Reshevsky, New York 1942. Considering that White plays a4 to prevent ...c6, it makes good sense to switch to the ...e5 break because all that White's a-pawn can then do is push the black knight towards e5 via d7, which is exactly where it wants to go!

8...♖c6 (D)



9 d5

After 9 ♖f3 ♗g4 10 d5 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 (it is also worth noting that White can play 11 ♗xf3, though this is not nearly as problematic if Black is careful; indeed, 11...♖e5 12 ♗e2 ♖ec4! already looks comfortable for Black, though as a warning I should mention

that 12...c6?! 13 ♖b3! cxd5 14 ♖d1! is better for White) 11...♖e5 Svidler's game notes stop here, but it is important to know how to handle such positions for Black since White still has an imposing centre and the situation is not at all clear:

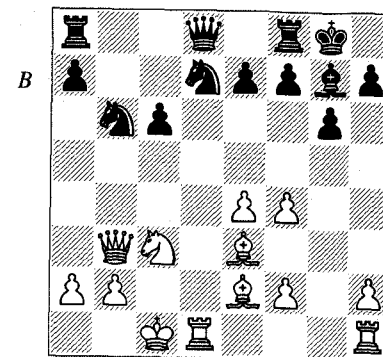
a) 12 ♗d4 e6! 13 f4 ♖ed7 14 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 15 ♖d4+ ♖f6 leaves Black already better because after 16 e5 ♖h4 White's pawns are fixed and weak, while an exchange of queens gives Black the better ending, e.g. 16 0-0-0 exd5 17 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18 exd5 ♖ad8 19 ♗f3 ♖b6! intending ...♖d6, ...♖fd8 and eventually ...♖xd4.

b) With 12 ♖b3! White intends to castle queenside and combine pressure on all parts of the board. 12...c6! (nothing else merits attention; Black must fight for his share of the centre) and now:

b1) 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 ♖xd5 (14 ♗xb6 ♖xb6 15 ♖xb6 axb6 16 ♖xd5 e6 17 ♖xb6 ♖xa2 and Black is at least equal) 14...♖c8+! 15 ♖b1 ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5 e6! 17 ♖c5 ♖d7 18 ♖d1 ♖e7! 19 ♖dc1 ♖c6 and Black has no problems. White has some variations within this line but as long as Black has some scope for his minor pieces, the white king is a little draughty and the white pawn-structure is shattered, I have full faith in Black's prospects.

b2) 13 f4! ♖ed7 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 0-0-0 (D).

This position arises almost by force after 8...♖c6 so it's worth examining in detail in case any prospective opponent catches onto the fact that it is far from being unplayable for White.

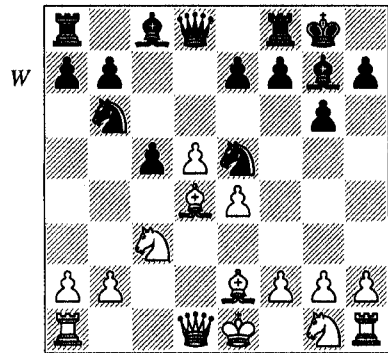


b21) The ex-Soviet IM A.Lagunov now played 15...♖c7?! and gave no comment to this move in his detailed annotations for *New in Chess*. I know if I were White the piece I would be least happy with would be my king, which has only two pawns to shield it. Hence, I would be seeking to 'tidy up' with ♖b1 and ♖c1 followed by putting the under-performing h1-rook on d1 and I may even want to play e5 to block out the g7-bishop. Bearing this in mind as Black, in the first case I don't want my queen on c7 due to potential threats of ♖b5-d4 and in the second I may well be obliged to play ...e6 to prevent the destructive e5-e6 and to support a knight on d5.

b22) These thoughts lead me to suggest 15...e6! as an improvement for Black. After 16 ♖b1 ♖e7 with ideas of ...♖fb8 and pushing the c- and/or a-pawns I already prefer Black. White could also try 16 ♖d6?! but then Black should play 16...♖c7!. Despite my previous comments, things are different this time! Black gains a tempo, protects his c-pawn and has the

concrete idea of ... f8 and ... f8 – again I like Black's position so I think White should try 16 a3 ?, which highlights the newly created weakness on d6. Black might then show the other benefit of having the queen on the kingside by playing 16... h4 with the crude notion of ... h6 at some stage but the more general aim of coordinating his rooks. The position is then thoroughly unclear but I suspect Black has his full share of the chances.

9... e5 10 d4 c5! (D)



An instructive but absolutely necessary move. White was threatening f4 followed by the exchange of Black's wonderful bishop on g7 so, in typical Grünfeld style, Black attacks the centre before White can fully mobilize.

11 xc5 ec4

Given the choice, it's almost always better to place this knight on c4 since White does not always capture on c4 and the knight on b6 is much more secure than its colleague on e5. For example 11... bc4 12 b3 b6 13 d4 leaves White in control.

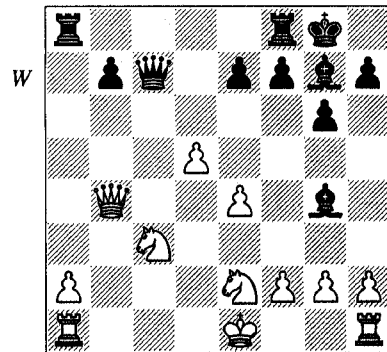
12 xc4

White could also try 12 xb6 but after 12... xb6 13 xc4 xb2 Black's position is overwhelming, so White's best move seems to be 12 b3 , when 12... xb2 13 c1 (13 xb2 a4) 13... xc3 + 14 xc3 a4 leads to a position which is still playable for White.

12... xc4 13 b3 xb2! 14 xb2 c7 15 b4

15 a3 b6 16 b4 a5 17 c1 axb4! 18 xa8 xc3 + gives Black a winning attack.

15...a5 16 ge2 axb4 17 xb4 g4! (D)



This bishop sortie is a recurring motif in the Grünfeld. By provoking f2-f3 Black can utilize certain tactical resources on the g1-a7 diagonal and the weakening of White's second rank, as we see here, can be useful later on. It is generally a good idea to force this weakening, and especially so here considering the strength of Black's dark-squared bishop.

18 f3 d7 19 0-0 b5!

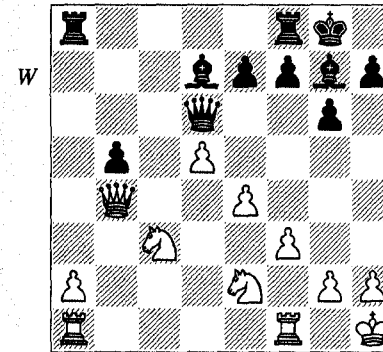
The strength of two bishops and the rigidity of White's set-up makes Black's position much the easier to play.

20 h1?

A rather clueless move, but I guess Black's reply is a far from obvious positional threat.

20 xe7 is also bad after 20... fe8 21 b4 f8 22 d6 (22 b3 b4 23 d1 a3 24 b1 b5 wins for Black) 22... xd6 23 b3 hx2 + 24 h1 e5 but 20 ab1! offers some chances since after 20... fc8 21 xb5 xb5 22 xb5 xa2 it is not obvious how Black will increase the pressure decisively.

20... d6! (D)



A beautiful transition, after which the advantage assumes concrete proportions.

21 xd6

21 ab1 was probably better since after 21... xb4 22 xb4 fc8 23 xb5 xb5 24 xb5 xa2 25 g1 h6! 26 f4 cc2 White is still breathing.

21... exd6 22 ab1 fb8 23 b4 a3 24 c1 c8 25 b3

25 xb5 xc1 + 26 xc1 e3! leaves no defence to ... e1 +

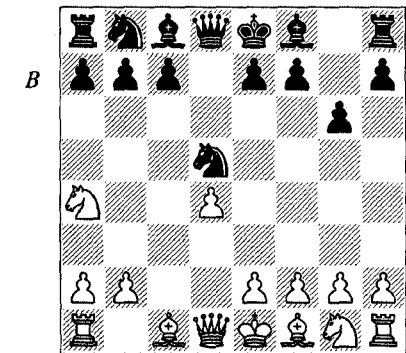
25... xb3 26 axb3 a8!

Ironically White would rather be without his extra e-pawn because at least then he could do something with his knights. Now he is just squashed to death – although he could have defended better, I don't want a minor observation or two to pollute the poetry that follows.

27 b1 a3! 28 d1 a2 29 f4 b4! 30 d3 e2! 31 g3 b5 32 xb4 e1 + 33 g2 d4 34 c2 e2 + 0-1

Game 12
Kharlov – Herrera
Ubeda 1997

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 d5 4 cxd5 xd5 5 a4!? (D)



Hello, I must be going. Rather like evading the customary pre-game handshake, White pugnaciously steers the game away from conventional channels. Not only does he move the same piece twice in the opening but

also puts a knight on the rim; both are crimes against classical opening principles. However, I have played this move myself and I think it deserves to be treated with the same seriousness we attribute to the other lines. To say it loses time is a little obtuse considering that Black has also moved his developed knight twice and putting a knight on the rim is generally thought to be fair game if it serves an important purpose there (♘h3 in the Leningrad Dutch, ...♘a6 in the King's Indian, etc.).

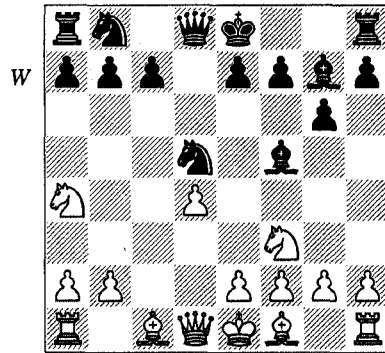
One good way to look at this move is simply to see it as early prophylaxis. White realizes that Black's main pawn-break is ...c5 and decides to put a stop to it. He also realizes that his extra centre pawn is a long-term asset and is wary of occupying the centre immediately with 5 e4 since after 5...♘xc3 6 bxc3 it is Black's move and he has the clear plan of ...♗g7 and ...c5.

Indeed, it's almost like White can't believe his luck at having made the exchange of c- for d-pawn and needs a move or two to get over the surprise before there are any further upsets! I consider this move similar to the other 'side-steps' since there too White's aim is to play e4 without allowing ...♘xc3.

The move is the brainchild of the Armenian player Nadanian, who should be congratulated for seeing what everyone has seen, and thinking what nobody had thought. His ideas have recently been endorsed by many grandmasters, including none less than Viktor Korchnoi, and many Grünfeld

experts have been unable to show a clear path for Black. It seems to me that Nadanian may be accused of being a tad too fond of his baby though, and I disagree with many of his assessments. That said, much of what follows is my own analysis, so please check these lines carefully!

Before proceeding, it is worth noting that White can continue to 'side-step' by playing 5 ♘f3 ♗g7 6 ♘a4 and thus avoid some of Black's sharper responses that I have suggested below. In this case 6...♗f5!? (D) looks to me like the most logical reply, mainly because White no longer has ideas with f3, to support e4.



For example, 7 ♘c5 b6 (not 7...♘d7 8 e4 ♘xc5 9 dxc5! ♗xe4? 10 ♖a4+) 8 e4 bxc5 9 exf5 gxf5 looks very comfortable for Black thanks to his lead in development and central control. The only extra option afforded to White is the absurdly consistent 7 ♘h4!? but then White is likely to have development problems and I suspect Black should just castle and then strive for

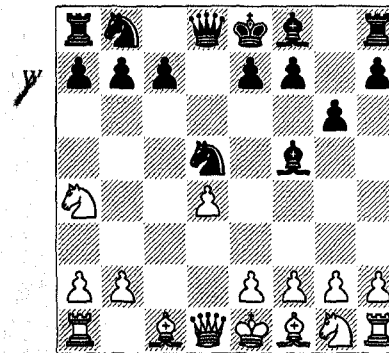
the ...c5 break, which would seem to give good chances, e.g. 7...0-0 8 ♘xf5 gxf5 9 e3 ♘d7 10 ♗d3 e6 (10...c5!?) 11 0-0 ♖e7, etc.

5...e5!

Most sources give this as dubious, but I've always felt that a dainty side-step is best met with a punch in the centre of the nose. Of course it's also possible to play 5...♗g7 with good chances of equalizing, but it is this immediate 'retribution' which would discourage me from ever playing this line for White again.

That said, whenever I mentioned to a chess-player that I was writing this book they always seemed to want to know my thoughts on 5 ♘a4 so I have decided to consider two alternatives as well, in case you don't like my main suggestion:

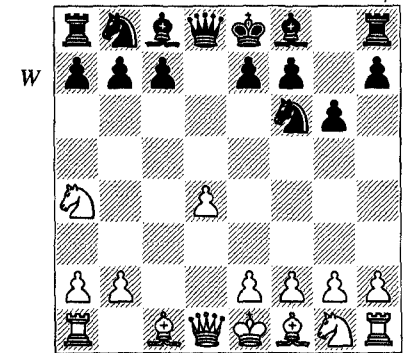
a) 5...♗f5!? (D).



Gambit's Assistant Editor, GM John Emms was watching the post-mortem of the following game and I am told that Sutovsky felt that this move was at least equal for Black. 6 ♘c5!?

(Nadanian recommends this move, but 6 f3!? may prove to be a more critical test; Sutovsky wouldn't say what he had prepared for this but I suspect it may have been 6...e5!?, which leads to all sorts of unexplored complications) 6...b6 7 e4 bxc5 8 exf5 gxf5! 9 ♘f3 e6 (Black is already slightly better according to Sutovsky – indeed, he is a pawn up and White's 'extra' bishop is well restricted by Black's pawn-chain) 10 ♗g5 ♗e7 11 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 12 ♖c1 cxd4 13 ♖xd4 0-0 14 ♗c4 c5 15 ♖d2 ♗d8 16 0-0 ♘c6 17 ♖fe1 ♖f6 left Black firmly in control in Sjödhahl-Sutovsky, Harplinge 1998.

b) 5...♘f6!? (D) has recently come to public attention due to a letter written to the editors of *New in Chess* magazine by Elie Agur from The Hague in the Netherlands.



The idea, of course, is to go one better than White, and prevent e4. Mr Agur seems to imply that the idea of e4 is the "whole concept" of 5 ♘a4, "...without which White cannot attain any advantage in this line". My first

thought is that 5 ♘a4 is not the type of move played "to attain an advantage" as such, but rather to tread new paths and try to outwit your opponents without learning reams of theory. My second thought is that on seeing 5 ♘a4 the concept that came most immediately to my mind was not the 'threat' of e4 but that White was trying to hold up Black's ...c5 break and preserve the space and central control given by his unopposed d-pawn.

In the Easter of 1997, just after 5 ♘a4 was published in *Informator* for the first time, I was looking at this line with English IM Jonathan Parker and one of my first thoughts was actually the somewhat amusing 5...♘f6. I wasn't entirely serious though, mainly because I didn't imagine that 5 ♘a4 would catch on in the way it has. I remember we joked that 6 ♘c3 ♘d5 might be best play and Jonathan suggested that "Years from now, they'll flick in 5 ♘a4 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 ♘d5 before White decides if he wants to play for a win with 7 e4, just as they often do in the Zaitsev variation of the Ruy Lopez." Several months later we are all taking these things a little more seriously and Mr Agur suggests that 6 ♘c3 may be White's best move but that Black's prospects are no worse after 6...♗g7 for example.

I think this last point is true and I also agree that 6 f3 ♘c6! is good for Black but I'm not quite so sure about the given analysis on White's quieter continuations with g3 and ♘f3:

b1) 6 g3 ♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♗f5! is given by Agur, who rightly points out that

White now has to deal with the annoying threat of ...♘b4. After 8 ♘c3! ♘d5! 9 ♗g2 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 ♗e4 Black is at least comfortable.

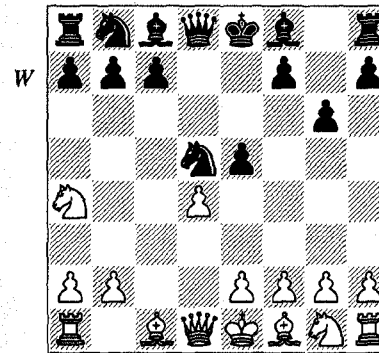
b2) 6 ♘f3! is not mentioned but it looks like the most flexible move. Presumably Black would now play 6...♗g7 (6...♘c6 7 e3!? intending ♗b5 looks slightly more comfortable for White – in general the knight is not very well placed on c6 unless Black has pressure on d4 or can somehow play ...e5) 7 g3!? no longer allows any immediate trickery. 7...b6!? now looks best so as to support ...c5 later and neutralize White's fianchettoed bishop. After 8 ♗g2 ♗b7 9 0-0 0-0 the position is probably a fraction better for White due to his slight advantage in space and Black's potential weaknesses on the c-file.

As a general comment, I think it is important not to underestimate the dangers present when White just holds the structure with the pawn on d4 and prevents Black's central breaks. It may seem that Black is in little danger when White has not played e4, but it often turns out that on completing development Black finds it hard to do anything significant while White can use his slightly greater central control to creep around the edges. Clearly there are similarities with the g3 lines here, but it's important to appreciate that the knight is not so badly placed on a4 and Black's knight is generally better on b6 than f6.

After all that chat I guess the message is that 5...♘f6 is playable and great entertainment value but, in my

opinion, probably not the best move, while 5...♗f5 looks promising but has not yet been sufficiently tested to be sure.

Returning to the position after 5...e5 (D):



6 dxe5

Nadanian also gives 6 e4 ♘f6 7 ♗g5 exd4! 8 e5 (8 ♗b3!? is mentioned, but this just seems to vindicate my point about Nadanian trying too hard to make this line work; after 8...h6 Black should keep the draw offer on the back-burner since I suspect White will soon resign) 8...♗b4+ 9 ♘c3 (9 ♗e2 ♗d5!) 9...♗d7! seems rather good for Black; if 10 ♗xf6 then 10...dxc3.

It seems to me that White's best move may well be the compliant 6 a3!?, which puts Black in a rather dangerous psychological predicament as White is probably not worse, but after 6...e4 Black has equalized comfortably and will have good chances in the middlegame if he doesn't get too excited.

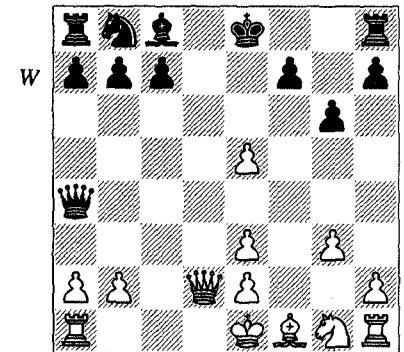
6...♗b4+ 7 ♗d2 ♘e3!

Objectively I think the main line of this sequence favours Black, but aesthetically it would be a real tragedy if it didn't.

8 fxe3

8 ♗c1 ♗xd2+ 9 ♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 10 ♗xd2 ♘c4+ is equal. In the Grünfeld there are many such sequences when a tactical flurry leads to an ending where Black has some residual activity. When this happens I advise you to leave the board for a few moments and look at the position with fresh eyes since it is all too easy to overheat.

8...♗xd2+ 9 ♗xd2 ♗h4+ 10 g3 ♗xa4 (D)



So we've landed. White has one more living foot soldier but three of them are in ill-health while all of Black's are fighting fit. It is fair to say that White has, and will have, greater control of the centre, which might suggest that Black's opening strategy has been a failure. White's bishop will be excellent on g2, the knight will normally go to f3 and has high hopes of finding a comfortable socket on f6.

There is also plenty of scope for White's major pieces, which have the c-, d- and f-files to share among themselves. Since White has so many firing lines on the black queenside, it is fair to say that the black king will quickly want to negotiate with his king's rook – and then White has some seriously weakened dark squares around the black king to be excited by.

So why am I recommending this for Black? "Because of the pawn-structure", as GM Peter Svidler likes to say in his Russian American accent. In a sense it is a do-or-die situation for White since if he loses control of the game his pawns will simply start to drop off; indeed his major pieces could soon have an open e-file to add to their collection! Seriously, after several hours of analysis I came to the conclusion that I would rather be Black since concrete analysis suggests to me that he can soak up the initiative, keep his king safe and start cleaning up on the e-file! White is by no means lost and Black has to be very careful, particularly not to capture on e5 too soon. It seems that best play leads to an approximately equal ending, but really, don't you think there is something comical about those e-pawns? – they just kind of sit there like they were on a train track waiting for diesel.

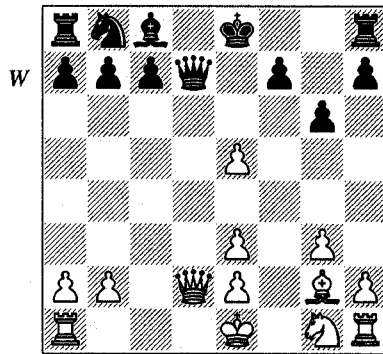
11 ♖d4

This is now thought to be inaccurate, due to the game continuation. 11 ♔g2!? is more critical:

a) 11...0-0 12 ♘f3 ♘c6?! 13 0-0 ♗d8?! 14 ♛c3 ♙f5 15 ♘g5, with a clear advantage to White, is another of

Nadanian's rather 'cooperative' lines. It seems clear to me that that Black's queen has to play a part in the defence of the kingside.

b) I am recommending 11...♗d7! (D).



Of course the more pieces that are exchanged, the less danger there is for Black. It is especially useful then to recentralize the queen with tempo since White cannot afford to exchange the ladies. In saying that, my suggestion is by no means Black's only way of playing, so if I have overlooked something in what follows then don't ditch the whole thing but return here with your patches. After 12 ♛c3 0-0 13 ♘f3 (I don't see anything better) 13...♗e7! Black reclaims some dark squares; notice how much more effective the queen is here than on a4. This is the critical moment for White; if Black is given time to develop and the initiative is quashed then it will soon become clear that White's manic pawn-structure is no more than a subtle joke for Black's amusement. The

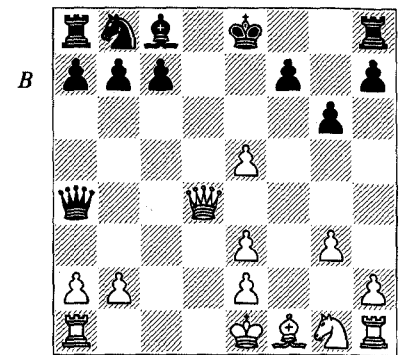
main idea appears to be to occupy f6 with the knight which, if allowed, would lead to serious threats on the black king. However, it appears that this can be prevented if Black is careful.

b1) 14 0-0 ♘c6! (plans with ...c6 and ...♘d7 may look more secure but the d6-square is a very good outpost for a white knight or rook; moreover, Black finds it difficult to take on e5 early on since once White puts a rook on the d-file, mutual captures on e5 allows White to play ♗d8+ at the end, when Black will be chronically tied up) 15 ♗ac1 ♙d7! (since he is lagging in development Black has to be {reluctantly} willing to give his c-pawn for the white spearhead on e5) 16 ♘d4 ♘xe5 17 ♛xc7 and now 17...♘g4! gives Black fully adequate counter-play.

b2) 14 ♘d2!? ♘d7! (14...♗e8 15 ♘e4 ♘d7 16 ♛xc7 ♘xe5 17 ♛xe7 ♗xe7 18 ♘f6+ ♔g7 19 ♘d5 gives White too much control) 15 ♛xc7 ♛xe5 16 ♛xe5 ♘xe5 give the approximately equal ending I referred to earlier. White has problems defending e3 and it seems that 17 ♙d5!? is the best solution since it enables White to play e4 without blocking the bishop. Now Black has a good counter-punch in the form of 17...♙h3!, which stops White castling and connects the rooks. A sample line: 18 ♘f3 ♘g4 19 ♘g5 ♘xe3 20 ♙b3 ♙g2 21 ♗g1 ♙d5 with a slight edge to Black.

Returning to the position after 11 ♗d4 (D):

11...♗a5+!



11...♗c6 12 ♘f3 0-0 13 ♙g2 ♗c2 14 ♘g5 is an example of the potential sting in White's position.

12 b4 ♗a3!

An excellent move, keeping the queen optimally active.

13 e6 0-0 14 exf7+ ♗xf7 15 ♙g2

Herrera assumes White can draw with 15 ♗d8+ ♔g7 16 ♗d4+ but it seems to me that Black can try for more with 16...♗f6. Now White has to stop ...♘c6 so 17 ♙g2, but 17...♘a6! looks rather good for Black, e.g. 18 b5 ♗a5+ 19 ♗d2 ♗xb5.

15...♙e6!

Healthy development; as I said White will normally be worse if Black can complete development.

16 ♘h3 (D)

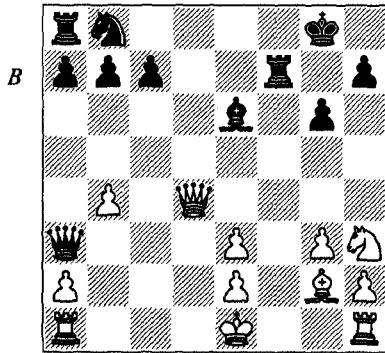
There seems to be nothing better:

a) 16 ♙xb7 c5! 17 ♗d8+ ♔g7 wins in very Grünfeldesque fashion.

b) 16 ♙e4 c5 17 ♛xc5 ♘a6 18 ♗d4 ♗c8 19 ♘f3 ♗c4 also shows the potential power in Black's position.

c) 16 ♗b1 ♙xa2 17 ♗a1 ♘d7 18 ♙d5+ ♗xd5 19 ♗xd5+ ♙xd5 20 ♗xa3 ♙xh1 is rather piquant.

d) 16 ♖f3 ♘c6 just wins for Black.



16... ♗xb3 17 ♜d8+ ♔g7 18 ♜d4+ ♔g8

Was Black mistaken to believe his grandmaster opponent? I think he can play on with 18... ♗f6. Herrera now gives 19 ♗f1 ♔f5 20 g4 without comment, which I found very suspicious, especially in light of 20...c5 21 bxc5 (21 ♜d2 ♘c6 22 ♗xc6 bxc6 23 gxf5 ♜xb4 seems slightly better for Black) 21... ♗a5+:

a) 22 ♔d1 ♘c6 23 ♗xc6 bxc6, when ... ♗d8 is a winning threat.

b) 22 ♔f2 ♗xg4+ 23 ♔g1 ♘d7 24 ♜xg4 ♜c7 25 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 26 ♜f3 ♗c8 27 ♗c1 ♜e7 28 ♜xb7 ♗c7!. Now that Black has tidied up the mess, White's king looks to be in long-term danger. 19 ♜d8+ 1/2-1/2

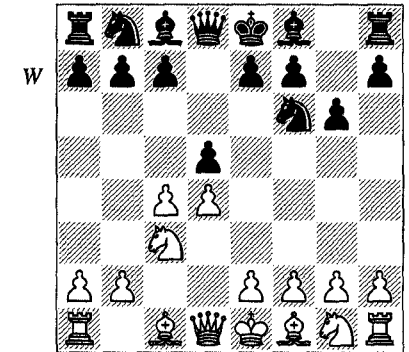
Conclusion

When White chooses one of these systems, he is seeking to minimize Black's counterplay against the centre and hoping to retain an advantage in space. In the first two cases I recommend an early ... ♘c6 to attack d4 followed by ...e5 generally or ...f5 if White's pawn is on f3 because in these cases it is difficult for White to complete development and his set-up makes less sense if Black doesn't challenge it immediately with the ...e5 break. If White harasses the knight on c6 with d5 Black should generally go to e5 but I recommend retreating to b8 if White has played an early f4. 5 ♘a4 is still very much in its infancy, but your author feels it is neither very bad nor very good and Black should definitely consider 5...e5!? as a response.

5 Random Monkeys

"It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can." – Sydney Smith

I have already explained that this book was never meant to be encyclopaedic, but, particularly for players unfamiliar with the Grünfeld who want to start playing it for the first time, I have included some brief recommendations against White's main off-shoots so that you'll be less inclined to panic when confronted with them. The chapter heading is dedicated to my friends Theo Trayhurn and Nick Fair, who use this term to refer to anything baffling, unpredictable or unfamiliar.



1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 (D)

Please remember the guideline that Black should only play ...d5 when White is threatening to play e4.

Therefore, after 3 ♘f3, 3... ♗g7! is the most accurate – only after 4 ♘c3 should Black play 4...d5!. Instead 3...d5?! is fairly common, but a mistake, as 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘b6 6 h3! leaves Black without sufficient space for his pieces and it will be very difficult to pressurize the white centre.

From the diagram, we consider:

a) 4 f3 is a monkey with a fairly threatening demeanour so I suggest you rise to the challenge with 4...c5! 5 dxc5 d4. After 6 ♘b5, 6... ♘c6! looks the most accurate, so as to force 7 e3

(7 ♗g5 a6) 7...e5 8 exd4 ♘xd4 9 ♗g5 (9 b4 b6! 10 ♗g5 ♗e7 is unclear but I like Black because White will find it difficult to complete development and his position is full of holes), when 9... ♗xc5!? is now a sacrificial approach but it seems to give Black good chances against White's weakened dark squares. 10 ♗xf6 ♜xf6 11 ♘c7+ ♔f8 12 ♘xa8 ♗b4+ 13 ♔f2 e4! seems to provide excellent compensation for the material and I'm not sure how White shepherds the king to safety. This follows analysis by Lechtynsky, a chap I have never had round for afternoon tea, so it's worth checking it over as Black is somewhat short of a rook but nonetheless my impression is

that White has problems here, e.g. 14 g3 ♖c5 15 ♗g2 ♕f5, when the initiative persists and my only objection is that the knight on a8 appears to be snoring.

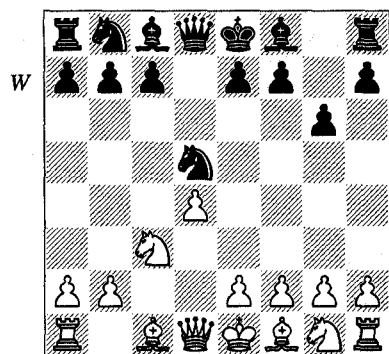
b) 4 g4!? is excessive. 4...dxc4! is a sober response and after 5 h3 ♕d5! 6 e4, 6...♗b6! appears to be untried but also very strong, e.g. 7 ♖xc4? ♕xc4 8 ♗a4+ ♕c6.

c) 4 h4!? is slightly less compromising but I still like 4...c5! 5 cxd5 ♕xd5 (the same position can be reached via 4 cxd5 ♕xd5 5 h4 c5) 6 dxc5 ♕xc3 7 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 8 bxc3 ♖g7 9 ♗d2 ♖f5 10 f3 ♕d7 11 e4 ♖e6 12 c6 bxc6, following A.Zaitsev-Smyslov, Sochi 1963, which Zaitsev went on to win, and in doing so encouraged others to play 4 h4, but obviously Black was not worse out of the opening.

d) 4 cxd5 ♕xd5 (D) and now:

d1) 5 ♗b3 ♕xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♕f3 ♖g7 8 ♖a3 ♕d7 9 e3 0-0 10 ♖e2 ♗a5 11 0-0 b5! gives Black good play.

d2) 5 ♗a4+ ♕c6! 6 e3 ♕b6 7 ♗d1 ♖g7 8 f4!? ♕b4! 9 a3 ♕d4 10 ♕e4

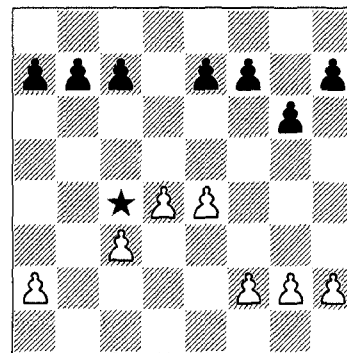


♕f6! 11 ♖d3 ♕xe4 12 ♖xe4 c5! 13 dxc5 ♗xd1+ 14 ♗xd1 ♕d7 15 c6 bxc6 16 ♖xc6 ♗b8 gave Black more than enough compensation in Korchnoi-Tukmakov, London USSR vs World 1984, but notice the importance the players attached to the central pawn-breaks ...e5 and ...c5.

In line 'd', there is no danger if ♕f3 and ...♖g7 are included; the idea of breaking down White's centre still applies and the same is true for 4 ♗a4+, which is no more dangerous than 5 ♗a4+ in Game 2.

6 The Anchor

"It's when you run away that you are most liable to stumble." – Casey Robinson



If Philidor's view that "Pawns are the soul of chess" is to be believed, then I think we can say that Black's soul is more grounded than White's here, though probably White has lived a little more deliberately.

White's soul is crying out to be seen and heard, singing and dancing in the centre of the dancefloor; impressing some and amusing others. Black is also confident, but quieter and more deeply self-assured, unintimidated by White's flamboyance and feeling a little more of what Nixon called "peace at the centre". Both souls are enjoying the party, but Black longs for White's visibility, and White for Black's self-possession. Nonetheless, they must suppress their mutual admiration as

they struggle remorselessly for control of the centre of the board, considered by many to be the ultimate source of all things.

The human predicament makes it difficult to steer clear of such mysticism but for now I'm going to try, by talking about the c4-square!

First of all, let's look at the c4-square. Notice that it can no longer be controlled by a white pawn, unless there is an 'event' on the b3-square and the isolated a-pawn finds itself in a warmer environment, but this is a rare occurrence.

Anyway, this c4-square is effectively an outpost for Black and in many lines of the Exchange Variation it allows the black forces an anchor on which to gain a secure hold on White's position, allowing access for other pawns and pieces. Indeed, I consider it one of Black's major strategic trumps in the Grünfeld because in a sense White's position is irreparably damaged from a structural point of view and it is often difficult for White to prevent Black from gaining a secure hold on this outpost. We will see how relevant this square is in the discussion of the ♖c4 Exchange which follows, but first I would briefly like to consider the following important game:

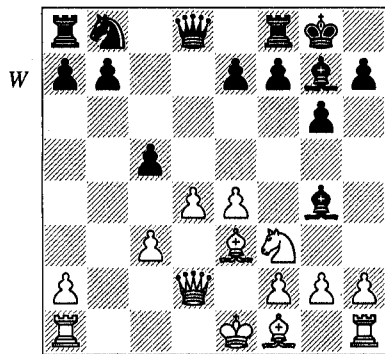
Game 13

Karpov – Kasparov

New York/Lyons Wch (17) 1990

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♝c3 d5 4 cxd5
 ♜xd5 5 e4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3 ♟g7 7 ♟e3
 c5 8 ♞d2 0-0 9 ♟f3 ♟g4 (D)

This is a very classical way to play against the white centre, but it seems to me that White's position is just too harmonious in what follows. I think it needs to be disturbed with an early ...♞a5. Still, if you don't feel the same



way, this is a good way to play against the ♟e3 lines if, for example, you are fed up of playing endgames. Black can also try lines with ...cxd4 and ...b6, which are playable, especially if White 'wastes' a move with ♞c1, but generally give White a slight edge as there are no problems holding the centre.

10 ♟g5!?

An important concept. If White played h3 before Black developed the bishop, Black would play something more active than ...♟d7.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♝c6

11...h6 12 h3! is good for White.

12 h3 ♟d7 13 ♞b1

13 ♞d1!?

13...♞c8! 14 ♟f3!?

14 ♞xb7? ♜xd4 15 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 16 ♞xd4 ♞c1+! 17 ♟d2 ♞d1+!! 18 ♟xd1 ♟a4+ (Karpov) is a thoroughly impressive variation which highlights White's lag in development.

14...♞a5! 15 ♟d3

15 ♟e2!?

15...♟e6!

"The black pieces have securely fastened onto the c4 point. It is a rule in many Grünfeld variations that the domination of c4, in the absence of organic pawn weaknesses, guarantees Black counterplay." – Karpov.

16 0-0 ♟c4

The position is now equal according to Karpov, but recent games have suggested that Black does not have enough play against the white centre. Note that the tempting 16...♝c4 is rather ill-conceived because after 17 ♟xc4 ♟xc4 18 ♞fc1 White will continue by exchanging dark-squared bishops, when the remaining black bishop won't do very much on c4.

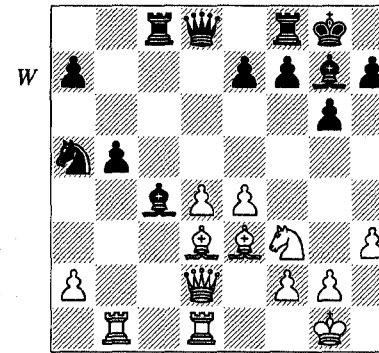
17 ♞fd1

17 d5!? – Seirawan.

17...b5?! (D)

A very instructive mistake by the world champion. Karpov now says: "This might seem to be quite in order; Black strengthens his hold on c4. But in doing so, he commits a major positional error; from now on, the queen-side pawn-chain becomes vulnerable and causes him a great deal of worry. The modest 17...b6! would have been

more appropriate." Moreover, Seirawan suggests that 17...♟xd3 18 ♞xd3 e6 would have been OK for Black but in my experience such positions tend to be surprisingly pleasant for White.



18 ♟g5!

The threat is not only 19 ♟xc4 ♜xc4 20 ♞b4 ♜d6 21 e5, but also in some variations ♟xe7, deflecting the black queen.

18...a6 19 ♞bc1!?

19 ♞dc1!? (Karpov) 19...♟xd3 20 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 21 ♞xd3 ♞b7 22 a4! b4 23 ♟d2.

19...♟xd3

19...♞e8!? looks more accurate, but I suspect Kasparov had not yet seen Karpov's crucial 26th move.

20 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 21 ♞xd3 ♞e8?!

This is a sign that Black is beginning to feel uncomfortable but 21...♞b7 22 a4 b4 and 21...♞d7 22 ♞a3 both demonstrate White's superiority.

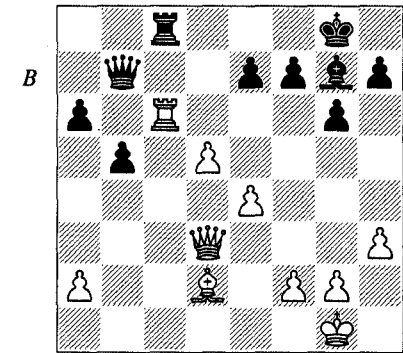
22 ♞c1 ♞b7 23 d5 ♜c4 24 ♜d2!

"A key factor in White's overall strategy. Evicting the last piece from c4, he seizes the vital file." – Karpov.

24...♜xd2

Black could have defended more stubbornly beginning with 24...h6!? but White is clearly better in any case.

25 ♟xd2! ♞c8 26 ♞c6! (D)



A devastating blow for Black and a good warning for future exponents of the Grünfeld; when you think you are safely contesting the c-file, take a good look around for the availability of White's entry squares.

26...♟e5

Karpov refers to the following beautiful but forcing continuation as "a simple win for White": 26...♞xc6 27 dxc6 ♞c7 (27...♞xc6 28 ♞d8+ ♟f8 29 ♟h6) 28 ♞d7 ♟e5 29 ♟h6 ♞xd7 30 cxd7 ♟c7 31 e5! a5 32 ♟f1 b4 33 ♟e2 a4 34 ♟d3 ♟d8 35 ♟c4 ♟a5 36 h4 ♟h8 37 ♟f8.

27 ♟c3!

Fantastic judgement; the major-piece ending is losing for Black.

27...♟b8

27...♞xc6 28 dxc6 ♞c7 29 ♟xe5 ♞xe5 30 ♞d8+ ♟g7 31 c7 ♞a1+ 32 ♟h2 ♞e5+ 33 g3 ♞b2 34 ♟g2.

28 ♖d4 f6 29 ♘a5! ♙d6 30 ♗c3 ♚e8 31 a3!

"Why hurry? The fruit will ripen of its own accord" – vintage Karpov.

31...♙g7 32 g3 ♘e5 33 ♗c5 h5 34 ♙c7 +- ♘a1 35 ♙f4 ♗d7 36 ♚c7 ♗d8 37 d6!

"The death agony of the black pieces, suffocating on the edge of the board, now commences." – Karpov.

37...g5 38 d7 ♚f8 39 ♙d2 ♘e5 40 ♚b7 1-0

40...h4 41 ♘a5! ♗xa5 42 ♗xe7+ ♙g6 (42...♚f7 43 ♗xf7 +-) 43 ♗h7+! ♙xh7 44 d8 ♗+-.

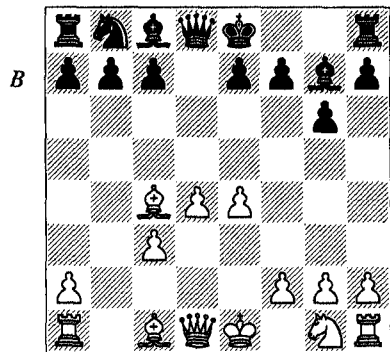
A beautiful paradox; to win the black queen, White must sacrifice his own!

Game 14

Van Wely – Nijboer

Dutch Ch (Rotterdam) 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♘c4 (D)



Personally, I have always felt there is something a little odd about putting

the bishop on this square. It looks very loose to me somehow and is extremely vulnerable to attack by the black pieces. Indeed, I feel that the bishop on c4 is floating somehow, as if it is not properly anchored into the white position. However, considering the chess giants who have used it to devastating effect it would be extremely pompous of me to treat this move with anything other than a great deal of respect.

Moreover, Botvinnik and Estrin refer to this as "the most active continuation", which suggests that Black has to play very actively in reply.

It is also worth noting that the world number three (July 1998 list) Vladimir Kramnik recently used this line almost exclusively to try to break down Shirov's Grünfeld in their recent ten-game match in Spain. He was unsuccessful, and we can learn a great deal from these games (included here) which are at the forefront of the theory of this line.

7...c5 8 ♘e2

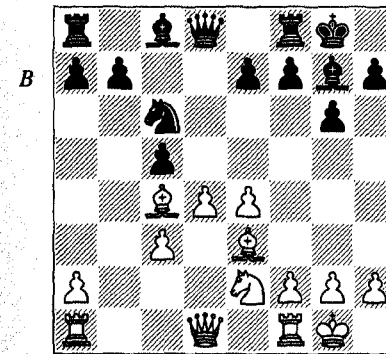
This mode of development is designed primarily to prevent an annoying pin on the knight on f3 and in some lines White can start a dangerous attack against Black's f7 point by pushing the white f-pawn to f5 and combining the c4-bishop and the f1-rook. A further reason to respect White's set-up is that it was suggested by no less than Alexander Alekhine back in 1924!

8...0-0

8...♘c6 9 ♘e3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♗a5+ enjoyed a brief spell of popularity recently but notably it was not ventured by Shirov, who must have been glad,

because Kramnik later displayed the fruits of his preparation for this line against Svidler in Tilburg 1998: 11 ♘d2 ♗d8 (11...♗h5!? may have some mileage, but it looks a little bombastic to me and I suspect White will soon find a convincing reply) 12 d5! ♘e5 13 ♙c3 0-0 14 ♘b3 ♗b6 15 f4 ♘g4 16 ♙d4 ♗a5+ 17 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 18 ♙xd2 e5?! 19 h3! exd4 20 hxg4 g5 21 g3! ♙xg4 22 e5 ♙xe2 23 ♙xe2 ♚fc8 24 ♚ad1 ♚c3 25 ♚d3! ♚ac8 26 d6 b5 27 ♚xc3 dxc3 28 e6! ♙f8 29 e7+ ♙e8 30 ♙xf7+ and Black resigned since it is fair to say that on this occasion Svidler did not create sufficient counterplay against the white centre.

9 0-0 ♘c6 10 ♘e3 (D)



10...♙g4

After years of avoiding the issue, I have to come to accept that there is good reason for this being the main line. First of all it develops Black's only undeveloped minor piece and makes way for a rook to come to c8. Secondly, it immediately applies pressure to the white centre and in doing

so provokes f3. This weakens White's second rank (often a crucial detail if Black's counterplay relies on a major piece penetrating to this rank) and provides important sources of counterplay on the a7-g1 diagonal.

Adorjan and Döry recommend the alternative 10...♗c7. I used to be impressed by the idea of sneakily trying to win the bishop on c4 with the black queen by taking lots of times on d4 and I also liked the variations that they presented in the book so much that I played this way for a while.

However, I soon realized that Black didn't really directly threaten anything since White could flick in a ♙xf7+ if Black tried taking twice on d4. As I grew up I also began to feel less comfortable with the other main idea of ...♗c7, to play ...♚d8, since I'm not happy about weakening my f7 point; if nothing else it seems to vindicate the bishop's decision to 'float' on c4.

More particularly, I don't think Black's chances are fully adequate in the line beginning with 11 ♚c1 ♚d8 12 ♙f4! ♗d7 13 d5. If the knight goes to a5 White seems to have a fairly comfortable space advantage and after 13...♘e5 14 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 15 f4 ♙g7 I am generally distrustful of Black's position but have a particular dislike of 16 ♗d3!? a6 17 ♘b3 b5 18 c4!, as in Nenashv-Liss, Groningen 1994, which looks at least a little uncomfortable for Black.

I had hoped to avoid a discussion of the Seville Variation that follows by suggesting that 10...♘a5 11 ♙d3 ♙g4 would transpose to the main line, but

then as none of my sources explained it for me I finally had to admit that 12 ♖c1! is much better than 12 f3 and since Black cannot win the d4-pawn or make use of the c4 point there is good reason to think that White is much better, especially considering the forthcoming f3 and d5, which will seize a considerable amount of space.

11 f3 ♘a5

It would seem that it is more accurate to delay the capture on d4 since this discourages the annoying deviations with ♗d5 or ♖c1, which are promising if Black first exchanges on d4.

12 ♗xf7+

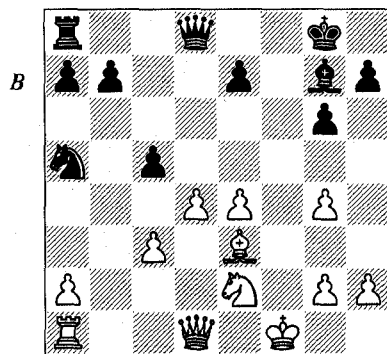
Since the popularity of this move can be attributed to Karpov, it is particularly instructive to hear what he thinks of the following positions: "The pawn-structure that now arises gives White every reason to count on the initiative, besides which he has an extra pawn. But then again, the position is highly dynamic and may very well suit the taste of the player of the black pieces."

12 ♗d5 ♗d7 13 ♖b1 ♖c7 14 ♗f4 ♖c8 is thought to be comfortable for Black: 15 dxc5 e6 16 ♗b3 ♗b5 gave Black good play in Ramma-Sakaev, USSR 1988.

12...♖xf7 13 fxg4 ♖xf1+ 14 ♔xf1 (D)

14 ♖xf1?! ♘c4 15 ♖f3 ♖b6! intending ...♖b2 is the important forcing sequence which obliges White to misplace his king.

It takes a lot of practical experience to appreciate the value of an extra



pawn which has little chance of being a passed pawn. In this case it is worth imagining the white position without the g2-pawn or the g4-pawn. In the former case White's king is exposed and in the latter Black does not have to worry about the king being cramped or the bishop being shut in on g7 by White pushing a pawn to g5. Normally when one side has an extra pawn the technique for exploiting the lead in material involves exchanging lots of pieces and winning a technical position with an extra unit; king and pawn endings tend to be especially appealing!

Ironically, Black would rarely have much to fear in a king and pawn endgame here as the extra g-pawn has no function in making a passed pawn – nor would three extra g-pawns for that matter! However, in many endgames, including some king and pawn endings, the extra pawn is useful in that it is one more pawn to be captured in cases where Black seeks counterplay on the kingside, which could be an important 'waste' of Black's time. Moreover, the

extra g-pawn makes it very unlikely that White will be placed in zugzwang at any stage because it will be easier for White to 'pass' with a neutral pawn move. Hence the extra pawn *does* matter, but not in the sense that an extra pawn normally matters!

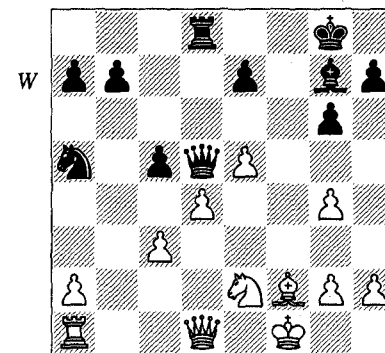
Black should therefore be careful about notions of seeking 'compensation' for the pawn because he does not need to transform things drastically to have sufficient play. The awkward placement of the white pieces, the c4-square and the somewhat brittle white centre (especially e4) is sufficient in this sense. What has interested me in the evolution of this line is the way in which Black has realized that it is probably not a good idea to think in terms of exploiting White's light-square weaknesses by forcing the pawns onto dark squares since this makes Black's bishop much more "bad" than White's, as we will see below.

Karpov's comments are again very revealing: "Let me emphasize that the main feature of the position is not the extra pawn; the freedom of Black's game compensates for this minor deficit. White's basic plan is to block up the enemy bishop on g7, by means of the pawn-chain c3-d4-e5-g5. Black will rely on tactical devices to enable his bishop to escape on the h6-c1 diagonal."

14...cxd4!

Following the 1987 Seville World Championship Match, after which the variation is named, Kasparov, according to Karpov, stated that the plan chosen by White with 12 ♗xf7+ was

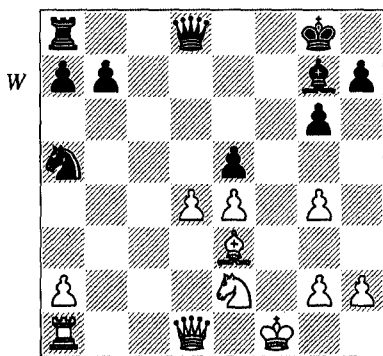
"unpromising". This was probably the World Champion's instinctive reaction, which is encouraging for exponents of the black side of this line. Nevertheless, in the post-match duel which follows, Kasparov was thoroughly routed, and I use this game as a model example to show that no matter how promising Black's light-square counterplay may look, it does not bite on anything in particular and this game suggests that Black's prospects are dim unless he can somehow use his g7-bishop: 14...♖d6 15 e5! ♖d5 16 ♗f2 ♖d8 (D).



17 ♖a4!? b6 18 ♖c2! (now there are some lines in which the black queen comes to c4 and the knight goes back to c6 where it is more vulnerable and White can gain a useful tempo with ♖e4) 18...♖f8?! 19 ♔g1 ♖c4 20 ♖d2! ("White continues the plan of restricting the bishop's mobility" – Karpov) 20...♖e6 21 h3 ♘c4 22 ♖g5! h6 23 ♖c1 ♖f7 24 ♗g3 g5 25 ♖c2 ♖d5 26 ♗f2 b5 27 ♘g3 ♖f7 28 ♖e1 b4 29 ♖g6 ♔f8 30 ♘e4 ♖xf2 31 ♔xf2 bxc3

32 ♖f5+ ♜g8 33 ♜c8+ ♜h7 34 ♜xc5 ♜f7+ 35 ♜g1 c2 36 ♜g3 ♜f8 37 ♜f5 ♜g8 38 ♜c1 1-0 Karpov-Kasparov, Belfort 1988. "Black's pieces never succeeded in breaking free" – Karpov.

15 cxd4 e5! (D)



A paradoxical move, popularized by Ivanchuk. Black voluntarily gives White a protected passed pawn, more space (not the same thing as a 'space advantage' – it could be argued that White has over-extended here) and by fixing a centre pawn on a dark square seemingly gives himself a 'bad' bishop. Funnily enough, the move is designed to increase the scope of the g7-bishop, not diminish it! The black bishop now has access to the f8-a3 diagonal and stabilizing the centre gives the black knight a secure blockading post on d6. Moreover, the white e4-pawn is now vulnerable to lateral attack and the white knight, no longer seeking the e4 spot, finds it difficult to play an active role. Furthermore, once the centre stabilizes, Black's queenside majority becomes a relevant factor in the position

since the tension in the centre and kingside no longer predominates.

16 d5

Black is in no way worse if White does not close the centre: 16 dxe5 ♜xe5 17 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♜c1 ♜c6 19 g3 ♜d3 20 ♜f4 ♜d4!? gave Black equal prospects in Seirawan-Olafsson, Reykjavik 1990. 16 ♜c1 ♜d7! 17 dxe5 ♜xd1+ 18 ♜xd1 ♜c4 19 ♜f2 ♜xe5 is also comfortable for Black.

16...♜c4 17 ♜d3!?

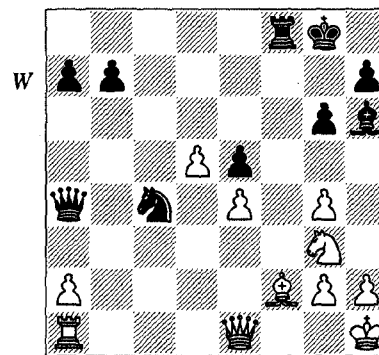
At the moment this appears to be White's only try for an advantage but we can learn something about it from considering the alternative 17 ♜f2 ♜f6 18 ♜g1 ♜f8 19 ♜e1 ♜h6. Black is already very active, and has ideas of ...♜d2 and ...♜e3. I guess white players switched from this line because they didn't like being so passive so early. 20 ♜g3 ♜a6 and now:

a) 21 ♜e2? loses to 21...♜xf2! 22 ♜xf2 ♜e3+.

b) 21 h3 ♜xf2 22 ♜xf2 ♜b6+ 23 ♜f1 ♜d2+ 24 ♜e2 ♜e3+ 25 ♜d1 ♜d3! 26 ♜e2 ♜d4 is easily winning for Black.

c) 21 ♜f1 ♜b2! 22 ♜h4 ♜d3! 23 ♜c3 ♜f4! 24 ♜e1 ♜e2+! 25 ♜h1 ♜c1! 26 ♜g3 ♜d3! 27 ♜b1 ♜e3 28 h3 ♜d4 29 ♜e7 ♜c8 30 ♜b3 ♜c3 31 ♜b1 ♜c1+ 32 ♜xc1 ♜xc1 33 ♜xc1 ♜xa2 34 ♜f1 b5 35 ♜f8 ♜e3 36 d6 ♜f4 37 ♜e7 ♜d2 38 ♜f3 ♜f7 0-1 Morot-Martin, corr. 1990. I have included this game mainly because I wanted you to share my admiration for the war dance by the black knight.

d) 21 ♜h1 ♜a4 (21...♜a3!? also looks promising) and then (D):



d1) 22 ♜g1! and here:

d11) 22...b6 23 ♜c3 ♜f7 24 ♜b1 ♜d2 25 ♜d3 ♜xa2?! 26 d6! ♜xd6 27 ♜xd6 ♜xb1 28 ♜xd2 a5? 29 ♜d8+ ♜g7 30 ♜g5 h6 31 ♜xe5+ ♜h7 32 h3! ♜d7? 33 ♜h5 and White won in Seirawan-Popović, Manila IZ 1990 – this is a classic example of what to avoid.

d12) 22...♜c8! is Stohl's suggestion and I think it is a good one. After White tidies up the kingside there is very little for the rook to do on the f-file and since Black wants to play ...♜d6 it would seem that it is much more useful to prepare this with ...♜c8, which improves an important piece, than with ...b6, which does little to enhance Black's scope of ideas. 23 ♜c3! (White definitely wants to stop ...♜d6 if possible, since then all of Black's pieces would be optimally placed; I am pleased to say that I don't see a particularly useful alternative move for White) 23...♜f4! (with the pawn on b6 and rook on f8 White could now play ♜e2 but here this could be answered by ...♜d6 hitting the queen

with tempo) 24 ♜b3 (presumably not forced, but how else is Black to be prevented from playing ...♜d6 with complete control?) 24...♜xb3 (24...♜d7!? 25 ♜xa7 is difficult to assess, but 24...♜a6!? looks highly promising) 25 axb3 ♜d2 "with counterplay" – Stohl. There are many possibilities in this position so it is understandable that he did not go any deeper with his analysis. At any rate, I think it is clear that Black is not worse here, e.g. 26 ♜e2!? ♜g5!? 27 ♜xa7 ♜xe4 28 ♜xb7 ♜c2 29 ♜g3 ♜xg3+ 30 hxg3 ♜d2! leads to a peculiar position where I would prefer to be Black. The tripled g-pawns are as ridiculous as they look, the white king is caged and whereas the black pawn will reach e3 at least, it is much more difficult to advance the white pawns. Yes, Black is two pawns down, but this is one of many examples in this line where quality is more important than quantity.

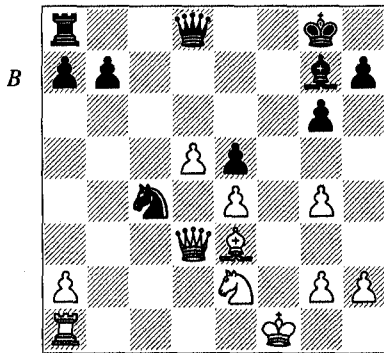
d2) After 22 ♜e2 b6 23 h4 the following two games are model performances for Black:

d21) 23...♜f4 24 ♜f1 ♜d6 25 ♜e1 ♜c8 26 g3 ♜c2 27 ♜f3 ♜xa2 28 ♜g1 ♜h6 29 g5 ♜g7 30 ♜e3 ♜c7 31 ♜g4 ♜f7 32 ♜e3 ♜c2 33 h5! ♜c4 34 ♜c1 ♜xc1 35 ♜xc1 gxf5 36 ♜xc4 hxf4 37 ♜c8+ ♜f8 38 ♜e1 ♜g7 39 ♜c3 ♜d6 40 ♜c6 ♜c5+ 41 ♜g2 ♜f2+ 42 ♜h1 ♜d4 43 ♜b4 ♜f7 44 ♜e6 ♜b7 45 ♜c6 a5 46 d6 axb4!! and Black went on to win in Ki.Georgiev-Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1989/90.

d22) 23...♜f4!? 24 ♜e1 ♜f8 25 ♜c1 b5 26 ♜c3 ♜e7 27 h5 ♜a6 28 hxg6 hxg6 29 ♜f5 gxf5 30 gxf5 ♜h6+ 31

h3 ♖g5 32 d6 ♙xd6 33 ♚d3 ♗g7 34 ♙d2 ♜xd2 35 ♚xd6 ♜f1+ 36 ♗h2 ♚f4+ 37 ♜g3+ ♚xg3+ 0-1 Ftačnik-Kudrin, Reno 1991.

Returning to the position after 17 ♚d3 (D):



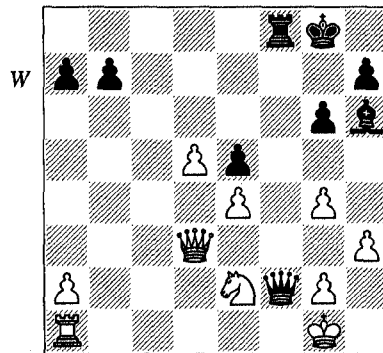
17...b5!?

Considering Morot-Martin above, it is hardly surprising that Black wants to keep this knight on c4. Moreover, it is rather counter-intuitive to my mind that Black should give White a protected passed d-pawn and then exchange the piece which would be such an effective blockader. Indeed, I was quite surprised that Shirov chose to exchange on e3 in his match against Kramnik and less surprised that Kramnik and Dolmatov suggest 17...♞c8!? in their notes in *Informator 72*. It would seem that all three of Black's choices provide adequate chances here but personally I think 17...b5 makes the best use of Black's resources.

17...♜xe3+ ("In my view, a rash decision" – GM Alexander Nenashev) 18 ♚xe3 and now after 18...♚h4

Nenashev's comment was "Another attacking move, after which it will be difficult to find a sensible plan. Not without reason did Karpov so like playing this variation – it is hard for Black to find a target to attack." This last point is particularly pertinent when Black exchanges on e3 since it seems that although the remaining pieces can be activated, Black is left with little dynamism, and White has no organic weaknesses. 19 h3 (White has some promising alternatives: 19 ♚g3 and 19 ♗g1!? ♚xg4 20 ♞c1 ♙h6 21 ♚xh6 ♚xe2 22 h3!) and now:

a) 19...♙h6 20 ♚d3 ♜f8+ 21 ♗g1 ♚f2+ (it looks pretty good at this point, but perhaps Black is just thrashing around) and then (D):



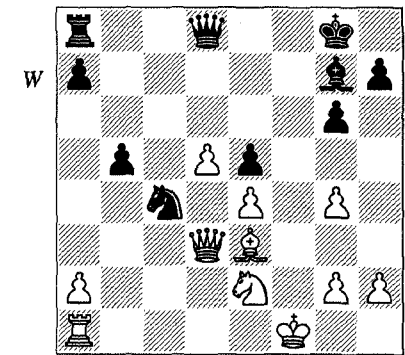
a1) 22 ♗h1 ♚e3 (22...♙e3?! 23 d6 ♜f3 24 ♜g1) 23 ♚xe3 ♙xe3 24 ♞d1 (24 ♜g1 ♙xg1 25 ♗xg1 ♞c8 forces a draw – Salov) 24...♜f2 25 ♜g1 ♗f7 26 ♞d3 ♙b6 (26...♙d4! deserved serious attention "in order to have an impetuous pawn on b5" – Salov; Kramnik now gives 27 ♜f3+ a question mark

and cites the variation 27...♜xf3 28 ♜xf3 b5 29 ♜xd4 exd4 30 ♗g1 b4 31 ♗f2 a5 32 ♗e2 a4 33 ♚d3 a3! 34 ♗c4 d3, winning for Black) 27 ♜f3+ ♗e7 28 ♜xf2 ♙xf2 29 ♜f3 ♗d6 30 g3 ("Here Vladimir must have calculated something like 30 ♜g5 b5 31 ♜f7+ ♗c5 32 ♜xe5 ♗d4 33 ♜c6+ ♗xe4 34 d6 ♙b6 35 d7 a5 36 d8 ♚xd8 37 ♜xd8 ♗d5 38 ♜b7 a4 39 ♗g1 ♗c6 40 ♜d8+ ♗d5 41 ♜b7 ♗c6 with a repetition" – Salov) 30...♙xg3 31 ♗g2 ♙f4 32 ♗f2 ♗c5 33 ♗e2 b5 34 ♚d3 1/2-1/2 Kramnik-Shirov, Cazorla WCC (3) 1998.

a2) 22 ♗h2!? may well be a significant improvement. 22...♙e3 23 d6 ♜f3 24 ♚d5+! transposes to a position which Nenashev says "would have concluded dismally [for Black]". Salov doesn't seem to have any recommendation for Black, while Kramnik and Dolmatov are conspicuously silent on the matter.

b) 19...b6 weakens the light squares according to Nenashev, but he refers to the above lines with ...♙e3 as "empty threats". 20 ♗g1 ♙f8 21 ♗h1 ♙c5 22 ♚d3 ♚f6 23 ♜g1 ♚f2 24 ♜f3 ♙d6 25 ♚a6 ♜f8 26 ♜g5 ♚e3 27 ♜e6 ♚c3 28 ♜g1 ♜f7 29 ♜g5 ♜e7 30 ♜f1 ♚c2 31 ♜e6 h6 32 ♜f8+ ♗h7 33 ♗h2 ♜g7 34 ♞d8 ♙e7 35 ♞d7 ♚xe4 36 ♚b7 ♚b4 37 d6 1-0 Nenashev-Conquest, Groningen 1997 is another demonstration of the dangers present for Black. I suspect it will soon become clear that it is better for Black not to take on e3 so early.

Returning to the position after 17...b5 (D):



18 g5

Obviously this is not forced, but I feel generally very comfortable about the black position here.

18 ♗g1!? ♜xe3!? 19 ♚xe3 ♙f8!? 20 ♞c1 ♚b6! 21 ♚xb6 axb6 22 ♞c2 ♙c5+ 23 ♗f1 ♞a4 24 ♜c3 (24 ♜g3 ♗f7!) 24...♞c4 is a sample variation against a plausible alternative but I suspect the future of the Seville Variation will stand or fall by whether White has a promising continuation on his eighteenth move.

18...♙f8 19 ♜g1 ♜xe3+!

Now there is a concrete follow-up to this move which changes the nature of the position.

20 ♚xe3 ♚b6!

Very instructive; a resource which makes good sense of choosing 17...b5 ahead of 17...♞c8.

21 ♚c3

21 ♚xb6 axb6 22 ♜f3 ♙c5! is presumably the idea. Black looks better here; among other things he has the crude threat of ...b4-b3.

21...b4 22 ♚c4 ♙d6 23 ♗e2 a5 24 ♜h3

This looks too ambitious, but it may be completely forced.

24 ♖f3 a4 intending ...♞a5-c5 looks like the reason that White felt compelled to manoeuvre the knight towards d3.

24...a4 25 ♖f2 ♜d8!

Attacking g5 and preparing ...♞c8.

26 ♜c1 ♞c8 27 ♜d2 ♞c4!

Now all of Black's pieces are working well.

28 ♖f1 ♜f8 29 ♜e2 ♙e5 30 ♜f3 ♙d4 31 ♞d1 ♞c2

Black has made full use of all his resources. His bishop on d4 is supreme and the queenside majority has made its presence felt.

32 ♙g4 ♜xf3+ 33 gxf3 ♖f8!

Sensibly using all the pieces; it appears that the success or failure of this line for Black often hinges on the possibility of blocking this pawn with the king while the other pieces do something active.

34 d6 ♖e8 35 f4 b3 36 axb3 axb3 37 fxe5 b2 38 ♖f6+ ♖f7 39 d7 ♙b6 0-1

White's centre may look imposing, but as is often the case in the Grünfeld, Black has found adequate counterplay and in this particular position the threat of ...♞c1 means that the b-pawn cannot be stopped.

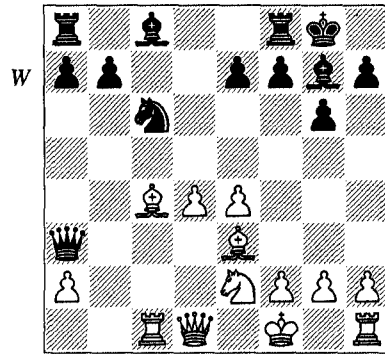
Game 15

Kramnik – Shirov

Cazorla WCC (1) 1998

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 e4 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♙c4 0-0 8 ♖e2 c5 9 0-0

9 ♙e3 ♖c6 10 ♞c1!? was popular in the early 1990s. White wants to hold the centre and checkmate Black on the kingside, beginning with h4-h5. However, this system seems to have been almost completely de-fanged by 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♜a5+ 12 ♖f1 ♜a3! (D).



A wonderfully subtle move devised by GM Ilya Gurevich. The black queen frees a5 for the knight and stares at the bishop on e3 in order to intimidate the f-pawn, which normally likes to make room for the king at this stage but no longer feels free to move. Perhaps the queen also feels that displacing the king was a sufficiently large achievement to warrant simple recentralization to the d6-square. Now:

a) 13 ♜b3!? is the main response. I think Black can take on b3 and have fair endgame chances but it is more fun for Black to try 13...♜d6! 14 ♙d5!? (14 e5 ♜d8 is unproblematic, as is 14 ♜c3 ♙e6!) 14...♖a5! was Atalik-Rõtšagov, Cappelle la Grande 1997. 15 ♜b5 ♜d8! would now have given

Black good chances in an unclear position. 16 ♞c5!? ♙d7! 17 ♜xa5 b6 18 ♜d2 bxc5 19 ♙xa8 cxd4! 20 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜xa8 22 f3 ♙b5 23 ♖f2 ♞d8 is slightly better for Black according to deep analysis by Rõtšagov and Atalik.

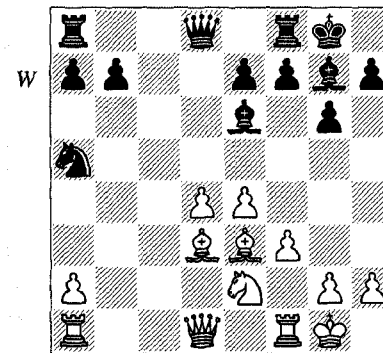
b) 13 ♜d2 ♞d8! 14 d5 ♙e5 15 ♙b5 b6 to be followed by ...♙a6 was clearly better for Black in Ftačnik-I.Gurevich, Biel IZ 1993.

c) 13 h4 ♙g4! is the key point of Black's idea.

d) 13 ♞c3 ♜d6 14 f4 e5! destroys the white centre.

It is also worth noting that after 9 ♙e3 ♖c6, the crude 10 h4? is met by 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♜d6! threatening ...♜b4+, which again highlights the precarious position of the bishop on c4. After 12 ♞c1 ♞d8 13 d5 ♙e5 14 ♜b3 ♙d7 Black was clearly better in the game Naranja-Portisch, Siegen OL 1970.

9...♖c6 10 ♙e3 ♙g4 11 f3 ♖a5 12 ♙d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♙e6 (D)



14 ♞c1

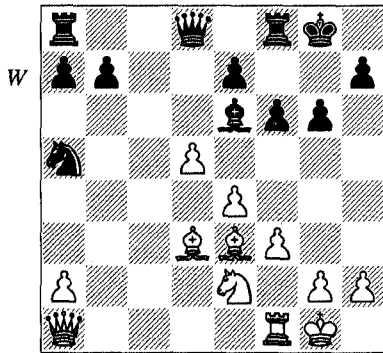
This is the main move, but there are two significant alternatives:

a) 14 d5. This double-edged move involves White sacrificing an exchange for control of the dark squares and kingside attacking chances. It is interesting to compare the views of Bronstein and Karpov on this move. The former world championship challenger (in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, 1995) highlights the distance of the a5-knight from the kingside and says "we will play 14 d5 as after 14...♙xa1 15 ♜xa1 f6 Black will be totally passive and White's pieces can use their fantasy and knowledge to create a strong offensive."

Karpov simply says (in *Beating the Grünfeld*, 1992): "The once fashionable Sokolsky Attack, 14 d5 ♙xa1 15 ♜xa1 f6, has practically fallen into disuse. Black is the exchange up and can extricate himself without too much difficulty."

Your author feels that both statements are fair. In fact, I feel that it simply depends on the abilities of the players who are contesting from this position. Most grandmasters would align themselves with Karpov here, but Bronstein's comments are more pertinent at club level where the initiative tends to be of more value than material. What follows is by no means a comprehensive survey of this position, but since most readers will want to know how to play as Black here, I have included several examples which show how to fight off the white initiative and eventually triumph with the extra material. Sometimes it is also possible to

return the material in exchange for some time to bust up the centre or seize the c-file, etc. **Please note that there is absolutely no need to try to memorize what follows.** I do suggest, however, that you build up your confidence by getting a feeling for how to play the black position. 14...♙xa1 15 ♖xa1 f6 (D) and now:

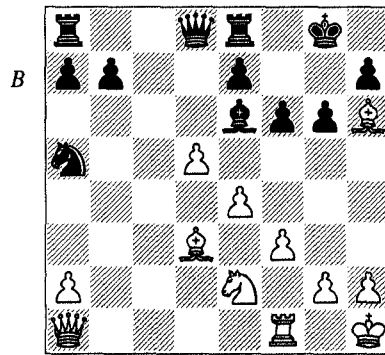


a1) 16 ♙h6 and then:

a1) Lalić suggests that here Black should consider returning the material with 16...♙d7 17 ♙xf8 ♖b6+ and recapturing on f8. My first thought was that this would save me and my readers a lot of work because 16 ♙h6 is not the only move after 15...f6 and yet surely it would be if Black played 15...♙d7 instead. I think this is an important point, but it forced me to examine Lalić's suggestion in more detail and I discovered that I didn't like the look of 18 ♖d4! (Lalić gives only 18 ♖d4!?) 18...♖xd4+ 19 ♖xd4 ♗xf8 20 ♖c1 ♖c8 21 ♖xc8+ ♙xc8 22 f4!, which looks like best play for both sides but also looks like a truly

horrendous endgame for Black! My thanks go to IM Malcolm Pein for helping me to get this clear in my head, and advising me that Black had good prospects if he just hangs on to the extra exchange.

a12) 16...♙e8! 17 ♗h1 (D) (17 ♖b1 a6 18 ♖d4 ♙f7 19 f4 ♖c8 20 f5 b5 21 fxg6 hxg6 22 a4 ♖c4 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♖xb5 ♖e5 is slightly better for Black according to Karpov) and now:



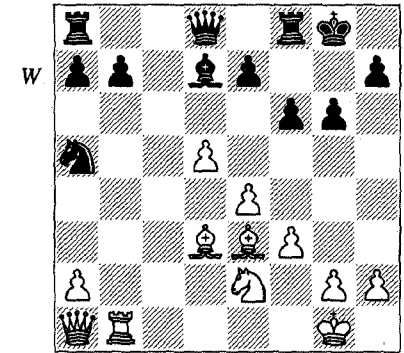
a121) 17...♙d7 18 e5 ♖c8 19 ♖f4 ♖c4 20 e6 (this looks like a mistake as it relieves the pressure on f6 and gives Black the d6-square; 20 ♙e1 ♖xe5 21 ♖xe5 fxe5 22 ♖xe5?? ♖c1+ is also good for Black, but keeping the tension with 20 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 21 h3 leaves the position fairly unclear) 20...♙a4 21 ♖xg6 hxg6 22 ♙xg6 ♖e5! (bringing back the reserves; after 22...♖xd5 23 ♙e1! ♙e5 24 ♙f7+ ♗h7 25 ♖h4 White's minor pieces are somewhat more effective than Black's!) 23 ♙e4 (23 ♙xe8 gives Black less to worry about) 23...♖a5 (preventing ♙e1) 24 ♖d4 (the queen is seeking the route

f2-g3; 24 ♖b2!? Korchnoi) 24...♖c4 25 ♖f2 ♖xe4 26 fxe4 ♖c3 (covering g3) 27 h3 (27 ♖xa7 leaves Black with a development advantage) 27...♖d3 28 ♖f5 (28 ♙e1 intending ♙e3 is possible – White still has need of the g3-square, e.g. 28...♖c8 29 ♙e3 ♖d1+ 30 ♗h2 ♖h5 31 ♖g3+ ♗h7 32 ♙f4) 28...♖c8 29 d6 ♖xd6 30 ♙f4 ♙e8 31 ♖b1 ♖d3 32 ♖b3 ♖xb3 0-1 Christianesen-Korchnoi, Reggio Emilia 1987/8.

a122) With 17...a6!? Black wants to use his bishop to defend the kingside but first has to prevent ♙b5 winning the idea to be aware of but it is rather time-consuming so may only hold up if White takes time out with ♗h1. 18 ♖e1 ♙f7! 19 ♖g3 (19 ♙d2!? b6 20 ♙xa5 bxa5 21 ♖d4) 19...♖d6 20 f4 ♖ac8 21 h4 ♗h8 22 ♖f3 ♖g8 23 ♖e1 ♖c4 24 ♖c3 ♖e3 25 ♖b2 ♖g4 26 e5 fxe5 27 ♙g5 ♙xd5 28 ♖g3 ♙e6 29 ♖g1 ♖d4 30 ♖xd4 exd4 31 ♙xe7 ♖ge8 32 ♙b4 ♖f2+ 33 ♗h2 ♖xd3 34 ♖xd3 ♙xa2 35 ♖f3 ♗g8 36 ♖xd4 ♖cd8 37 ♗g3 ♙c4 38 ♖d2 ♙e3+ 0-1 Drentchev-Macieja, Rimavska Sobota 1992.

a2) 16 ♖b1!? ♙d7 (D) and here:

a21) 17 e5 ♙c6!! (this move, discovered by GM Chuchelov, was actually quite central to the demise of the line beginning with 14 d5 at the highest levels; prior to this game Black had tended to capture on e5 and White had good compensation) 18 exf6? (18 dxc6 ♖xd3; 18 ♖f4 g5! 19 dxc6 gxf4; 18 ♙e4 f5!; 18 ♖c3!? ♙xd5 19 ♖d1 is White's best hope according to Lalić, but I am also unconvinced and this may be a good moment for Black to



relieve the tension by giving some material back: 19...♙f7!? 20 ♙xg6 ♙xg6 21 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 22 exf6 exf6 23 ♙xa7 ♖c6 24 ♙c5 ♖fe8, when personally I prefer Black because White's bishop will find it difficult to have any major influence, e.g. 25 ♖e4 ♙xe4 26 fxe4 ♗g7! 18...♖xd5 19 fxe7 (19 ♙e4 ♖d6 is just clearly better for Black since White will have no compensation for the exchange) 19...♖xf3! is now winning for Black.

a22) 17 ♖f4 ♖b8! (it is well worth knowing of this manoeuvre) 18 ♖c3 b6 19 ♙a6 ♖d6 20 ♖d3 ♙c8 21 ♙b5 ♙b7 22 ♖f4 ♖fc8 23 ♖d3 a6 24 ♙a4 b5 was clearly better for Black in Nikolic-Hort, Amsterdam 1978.

a23) 17 ♙h6 ♖f7 18 e5 ♙c6!? 19 e6 ♖g7 20 dxc6 ♖xd3 21 cxb7 ♖xb7 22 ♖f4 ♖e3+ 23 ♗h1 ♖c8! is fairly unexplored but somehow I don't feel that Black should be worse. The following are just some ideas I found which may be quite important. 24 ♙e1 ♖c3! (24...♖d2 25 ♖d1 ♖e3 is a draw – and perhaps a safer way to do it!) 25 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 26 ♙xg7 (26 ♖b1 ♖d8 27

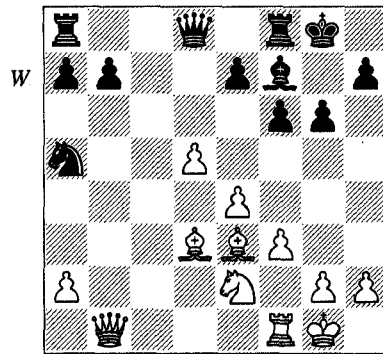
♠d5 ♚d3) 26...♗xg7 27 ♠d5 ♚c5!
(trying to play on in the hope that e6
will be weak) 28 ♗xe7 ♗f8 29 ♚b1
♠d6! traps the knight.

a3) 16 ♠d2 ♠f7 17 ♚e1 ♠c6! 18
♠h6 ♚b6+ 19 ♗h1 ♠e5 20 ♠b1 ♚fc8
21 h3 ♠e8 22 ♠d2 ♠c4 23 ♠c3 ♠a3
24 ♠d3 ♚e3! 25 ♚d1 ♠b5! 26 ♠xb5
♠xb5 27 ♠a1 ♠c7 28 ♚e1 ♚ac8 29 a4
♚c2! 30 axb5 ♠d2 31 ♚b1 ♚xe2 32
♚g1 ♚cc2 33 ♠b2 ♚b3 0-1 Thorbergs-
son-Gligorić, Reykjavik 1964. Another
model game: Black used the c-file well
and exchanged off White's dangerous
pieces.

a4) 16 ♗h1!? ♚c8 17 ♠h6 ♚e8 18
g4 ♠d7! (keeping f7 for the king) 19
g5 ♠c4 20 ♠xc4 ♚xc4 21 gxf6 exf6
22 ♠f4 ♗f7 23 ♠d3 ♚a5 24 ♚b2
♚c3 25 ♚b1 ♚c2 26 e5 ♚xb1 27 e6+
♠xe6 28 dxe6+ ♚xe6 29 ♚xb1 b6 (a
very solid transformation by GM Gavri-
kov; White has many weak pawns and
the rooks are more effective than the mi-
nor pieces, which have nothing to at-
tack) 30 ♠f4 ♚e2 31 ♠g3 ♚xa2 32 ♠f2
♠d4 33 ♚c1 ♠d7 34 ♠e4 ♗g7 35 ♠e1
f5 36 ♠g5 ♚e2 37 ♗g1 h6 38 ♠h3 g5
39 ♠f2 ♠e6 40 ♗f1 a5 41 ♚c8 a4 42
♠b4 ♗g6 43 ♚g8+ ♗h7 44 ♚c8 ♠d4
45 ♚c7+ ♗g6 46 ♠c3 ♠d5 47 ♠b4 b5
48 ♠c3 ♠dd6 0-1 Geller-Gavrikov,
USSR Ch 1985.

a5) Lalić suggests that 16 ♚b1!? is
well worth investigating and I think
he is right. Considering the line-up of
queen and bishop against g6 I think
16...♠f7! (D), bolstering the kingside,
is almost certainly best.

Then after 17 ♠d4, 17...♚c8 18
♚b4 b6 19 ♠h6 ♚e8 20 ♠b5 ♠d6,



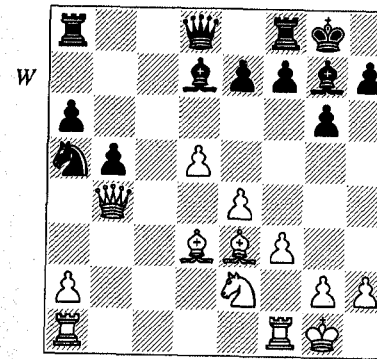
“when Black gives back the exchange
but repulses White's attack with the
likely outcome of a draw”, is a reason-
able line and fair assessment by Lalić,
but here we can maybe improve for
Black with a suggestion of former world
champion Euwe, which I found in an
older source, *The Grünfeld Defence*
by Botvinnik and Estrin: 17...♠d7! (to
improve the scope of the f8-rook) 18
♠b5 ♠d6 gives Black “good chances
of successful defence” – Euwe.

a6) 16 ♠d4 ♠f7 17 ♠h6 ♚e8 18
♠b5 e5 19 ♚f2 ♚e7 20 ♠e3 ♚c8!
(material for time) 21 ♠xa7 ♠c4 22
♠c5 ♚ec7 23 ♠b4 ♠e8! 24 ♠c3 ♠d6!
(forcing exchanges) 25 ♠xe8 ♚xe8
26 ♚b6 ♠f7 27 ♚e3 ♗g7 28 ♠d1
♠d6 29 ♠d3 ♠d7 30 h3 ♠b5! (more
exchanges) 31 ♠xb5 ♚xb5 32 a3 ♚c2
33 d6 ♠d7 34 f4 ♚e8 35 fxe5 ♚xe5 36
♠d4 b5 37 ♠d2 ♚c4! (still more ex-
changes!) 38 ♚xc4 bxc4 39 ♠d4 ♚e6
40 ♠b4 c3 41 ♚xc3 ♚xe4 42 ♚c5 g5!
(counterplay in the kingside) 43 ♠d5
♚e5 44 ♠d1 ♗g6 45 ♗h2 h5 46 a4
♚e8 47 ♠a5 ♗g7 48 ♠b6 g4 49 hxg4
hxg4 50 ♠d4 ♗g6 51 a5 f5 52 a6 ♚e4

53 ♠d5 ♚h7+ 54 ♗g1 g3 55 ♗f1
♚h1+ 0-1 Gligorić-Portisch, Nice OL
1974. A highly thematic, model game
for Black in this line.

If it makes you feel any better about
this amorphous haze of variations
(‘a1’-‘a6’), your author is also some-
what bewildered, but I am also very
comfortable with Black's prospects
generally.

b) 14 ♚a4 is White's second alter-
native and it is also by no means venom-
less. 14...a6 15 d5 ♠d7 (15...b5!?) 16
♚b4 b5! (D) is a fairly common se-
quence; I prefer to gain space on the
queenside and play against the centre
than grab material and defend. Be-
sides, there's been enough of that for
one chapter!



b1) 17 ♠ad1!? has not been tried to
my knowledge. After 17...♚c8, I was
going to stop and say that the idea of
...♠c4 gives Black a good position,
but then I noticed the switch-back 18
♚c1!? e6 19 ♚xc8 ♠xc8 20 ♚c1!, try-
ing to highlight the over-loaded nature
of the black queen. Then 20...♠b7 21

♠d4 is definitely not what we're look-
ing for, but 20...exd5 21 ♚xc8 ♚xc8
22 ♚xa5 dxe4 23 ♠xe4 leads to a po-
sition not at all untypical of the Grün-
feld. The minor pieces find it difficult
to attack anything and the black queen,
rook and bishop have more than enough
open lines to share amongst them-
selves. Black also has good chances to
create a passed pawn on the queenside
and a2 can become weak. However,
White controls a lot of squares and
threatens ♚b6 followed by ♠b7 so
Black has to act fast. 23...♚c4!? looks
like a good way to start. I think Black
is at least no worse – note how annoy-
ing it is for White that the pawn is on
f3!

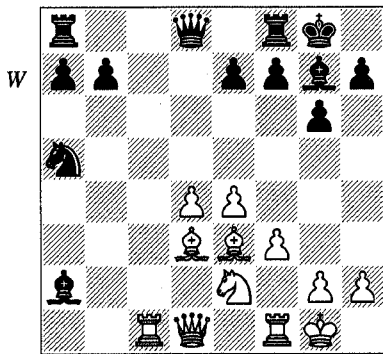
b2) After 17 ♚ac1 we have two
games that suggest that Black has good
prospects. 17...e6 18 dxe6 ♠xe6 19
♚fd1 ♚c8 20 ♠c5 ♠c6 21 ♚a3 ♠e5!
and now:

b21) 22 ♠xb5 axb5! 23 ♚xd8
♚fxd8 24 f4 ♠c4 25 ♚b4 ♠d2 26 f5
gxf5 27 exf5 ♠d5 28 ♚xb5 ♚xe2 29
♠f2 ♠d2 30 a4 ♠d4! 31 ♠xd4 ♚xg2+
32 ♗h1 ♠a8! 33 h4 ♚c2+ 34 ♗g1
♚xc1+ 35 ♗f2 ♠d6 36 ♚e5 ♚8c2+ 37
♗g3 ♚g2+ 38 ♗f4 0-1 Nenashev-
Krasenkov, USSR Army Ch 1987.

b22) 22 ♠xf8 (an attempt to im-
prove by Nenashev, who does a good
job of bringing out the best in the Grün-
feld in both these games) 22...♠xf8 23
♚xc8 ♚xc8 24 ♚b2 ♚c5+ 25 ♗h1
♠xf3!! (a stunning conception) 26 ♠f4
(26 gxf3 ♚f2 27 ♚ff6 ♠h3 28 ♚g1
♠e7! 29 ♚f4 ♠d6! forces a win)
26...♠hx2 27 ♠xe6 ♚h5 28 ♠f4
♚xd1+ 29 ♗hx2 ♠h6 30 ♠d5 ♚xd3

31 ♖e5 ♗a3 32 ♘e7+ ♕f8 33 ♘d5 ♕g8 34 ♘f6+ ♕h8 1/2-1/2 Nenashev-Chuchelov, Novosibirsk 1989.

14...♗xa2! (D)



Absolutely forced in view of the positional threat of d5, but this is always a tasty cookie.

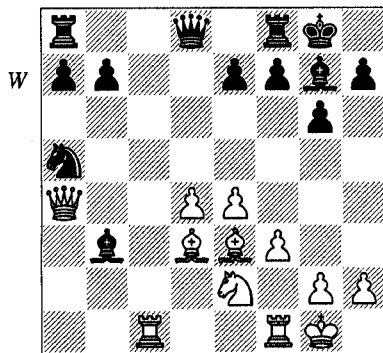
15 ♗a4

15 d5!? is thought to be past its sell-by date. 15...♗b3! 16 ♗e1 e6 17 ♗b4 exd5 18 ♖c5 ♗c4 19 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 20 ♖xd5 ♗xd5! 21 exd5 ♘xe3 followed by ...♘d5 gives Black a clear advantage due to the passed a-pawn and the weakened squares around the white king.

15 f4!? may well be the instinctive choice of aggressive club players but it is too crude to be effective. Black's problems lie in the centre, and on the queenside, where his pieces are somewhat entangled. It makes some sense to take advantage of their absence from the kingside, but the c4-square is once again a crucial anchor for Black which allows him to chisel away at the white centre. 15...a6! (forcing control

of the c4-square) 16 f5 b5 17 e5 follows Nenashev-Notkin, St Petersburg 1995 and now 17...♘c4!, decentralizing the knight, is the best way to start the distractions. 18 ♗g5 ♘b2 19 ♗d2 ♘xd3 20 ♗xd3 ♗c4 21 ♖xc4 bxc4 22 ♗xc4 ♗d7 is given by Notkin. Black will meet the consistently crude f6 with ...♖fc8 and ...♗f8, which will be winning: 23 f6 exf6 24 exf6 ♖fc8!.

15...♗b3! (D)



I think this definitely poses more problems for White than the more compliant 15...♗e6. The point is that d4-d5 is an integral part of White's strategy and Black prefers to have the bishop outside the pawn-chain, attacking the centre from behind and preventing White's king's rook from taking up its optimal post on d1. It is also useful to force the white queen to b4 so that Black can be assured of the defensive resource ...♗d6.

16 ♗b4

16 ♗a3!? has not been tried to my knowledge but since White doesn't seem to threaten ♗d2 in view of the

weakness on d4, it doesn't look like anything to worry about.

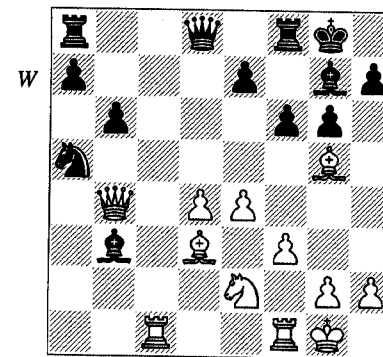
16...b6 17 ♗g5

17 ♖c3!? (Timman's novelties tend to be very dangerous, but on this occasion Black has everything covered) 17...♗e6 18 ♗g5 (18 ♖fc1 ♗d6! is a classic and fully adequate rebuttal; 18 ♗f4!? is an attempt to prevent Black's main defensive resource and the position remains complex after 18...♖c8 19 ♖fc1 ♖xc3 20 ♖xc3 ♗d7 21 ♗c7 ♗e8 – Timman) 18...♖e8! (18...f6?! 19 ♗f4 would be an improved version of what we've just considered) 19 ♗b5 ♗d7 20 ♗a6?? (missing a crushing tactical blow; 20 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 21 ♖fc1 ♖ad8! is equal according to Timman) 20...♘c6 21 ♗c4 b5!! 22 ♗c5 (22 ♗xb5 ♘a5! 23 ♗a4 ♗xb5 24 ♗xb5 ♗xd4+ 25 ♘xd4 ♗xd4+ 26 ♖e3 ♘c4 27 ♗a4 ♗c5!) 22...♗b6 23 ♗xb6 axb6 24 ♗b7 ♘xd4 25 ♘c1 ♖a7 26 ♗d5 ♘e6 27 ♗d2 ♗xc3 28 ♗xc3 ♘c5 29 ♗a2 ♗e6 30 ♗b1 ♖d8 0-1 Timman-Hellers, Malmö 1997.

After 17 d5 ♗d6! 18 ♗d2?! (18 ♗xd6 exd6 19 ♗a6 ♗a4! is unclear according to Anand) 18...♖fd8! (a strong move, preparing the central ...e6 break) 19 ♗xd6 (19 ♗a6 ♗xb4 20 ♗xb4 e6! 21 ♗e7 ♖d7 22 d6 ♗e5 23 ♗b5 ♗xd6! 24 ♗xd7 ♗xe7 is a typical exchange sacrifice which is favourable for Black) 19...exd6 20 ♗g5 ♖dc8 21 ♗a6 ♖c5! Black is a clear pawn up and has definitely won the opening battle, Yusupov-Anand, Wijk aan Zee Ct (2) 1994.

17...f6! (D)

Preparing a little nest for the bishop on f7.



18 ♗f4

18 ♗h4!? was played in Kramnik-Shirov, Cazorla WCC (5) 1998. "This stunning novelty [18 ♗f4 was played in the first game] is the best demonstration of the advantages of a sado-masochistic approach to chess. It had an immediate devastating effect on Alexei's self-composure. Almost without thinking he blitzed out the following moves... 18...♗d6 19 ♗xd6 exd6 20 d5 f5? (many publications have rightfully pointed out that almost any other move would have been better; the objective evaluation of the move 18 ♗h4 may be inferred from the fact that Kramnik didn't give it a second try in the match)." – Valery Salov. Indeed, 20...♖ac8 21 ♗a6 ♖c5 is given by Kramnik and Dolmatov in *Informator*; I presume the idea is that 22 ♗f2 ♗c4!? holds things together for Black: 23 ♗xc5 ♗xa6 24 ♗xd6 ♗xe2 25 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 leads to a strange position which offers chances to both sides. I think I would rather be Black because his king is well-placed to deal with the white pawns and it seems that

White will only be able to cause trouble with one rook, not two, viz. 26 ♖f2!? ♗c4! keeping the rooks out, looks much better for Black.

By the way, I didn't want to interrupt Salov's eloquence, but you should know that 18...♗f7!? 19 d5 ♖d6 20 ♖xd6 exd6 also looks playable for Black.

The game continued 21 exf5 gxf5 (21...♗xd5!?) 22 ♖g3! ♗b2 23 ♖xf5 ♗c4!! There is not too much to say about this move and what follows from it. I strongly advise you to get to grips with this game from another source but I don't want to trivialize Shirov's truly fantastic defensive play with superficial snippets. The game was eventually drawn on move 65 in what was perhaps the hardest fought game of the match.

18 ♗e3 ♗f7 was originally given as unclear by Anand in his annotations to his game against Yusupov above and I don't have anything significant to add to that, except that 19 ♗a6 ♖d6 looks like a likely continuation and I like the fact that Black has an extra pawn while all his minor pieces are secure.

18...e5!

Of course, given the chance, Black should destroy White's centre.

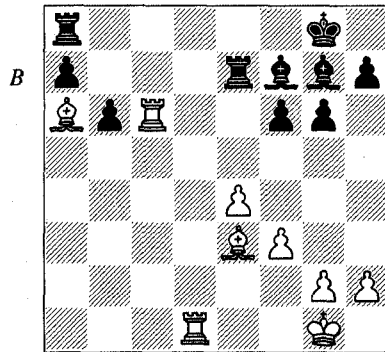
19 ♗e3 exd4 20 ♖xd4 ♗f7!

Black's play makes a coherent impression. Probably White now has slightly less than full compensation for the pawn.

21 ♗a6

21 ♖fd1 ♗e8 22 ♗b5 ♖e7! is an important detail.

21...♗e8! 22 ♖fd1 ♖e7 23 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 24 ♖c6 ♖xc6 25 ♖xc6 (D)



1/2-1/2

The decision to agree a draw has more to do with this being the first match game (avoiding losing is the priority) than the position on the board, which offers Black some chances to make use of the extra pawn. Salov gives 25...f5! 26 ♗g5 ♗e5 27 ♖c7 fxe4 28 ♖dd7 ♖xg5 29 ♖xf7 ♗d4+ 30 ♖f1 exf3 31 ♗c4 fxe2+ 32 ♖e2 "and White miraculously holds on".

Conclusion

1) The c4-square is a key strategic point in the Exchange Variation of the Grünfeld and Black can use it as an anchor to hold on to White's position.

2) The main line with ...♗g4 and ...♖a5 is the most reliable way to meet the Exchange Variation with ♗c4. Neither the Seville Variation nor the forcing lines where Black takes material and defends look problematic at present.

7 Drawn Endgames?

"Our lives are frittered away by detail ... Simplify, simplify." – Henry David Thoreau

It is widely thought to be unavoidably true that playing the Grünfeld necessarily involves incorporating some drawn, or at least drawish endgame lines into your repertoire.

I think this is a misconception. Firstly, in most cases the lines referred to are late middlegames rather than endgames, which means that to begin with only the queens and perhaps one pair of knights have been exchanged. Secondly, more often than not these lines are only superficially drawish and there tends to be ample scope for both players to outplay the opponent. It is also fully possible have a Grünfeld repertoire which largely steers clear of such lines, but I suspect this involves playing some inferior positions.

Also, at the risk of antagonizing my reader, almost all the players I consider to be "strong" can be classed as "endgame players" to an extent. This is mainly because you are considerably more powerful in the middlegame if you are confident of transforming advantages and disadvantages into more manageable forms in the endgame. In fact, I have it on good authority that one of the world's strongest players (now retired from chess), GM Gata Kamsky, went further and said: "All

strong players are endgame players" – and he was a prominent exponent of the Grünfeld!

Indeed, if you are aghast at the very thought of exchanging queens then I fear you are missing out, or at the very least you are probably looking at the wrong opening! To my mind the late middlegame and endgame stages are by no means boring and include some of the most profound and beautiful ideas in chess. In fact, I find these stages are generally far more engaging than the latest theoretical developments, so perhaps I could be accused of writing the wrong book!

Of course I don't quite see it this way. In fact I feel that trying to sever the links between the different stages of the game is contrived and misleading. Most people buying an opening book will have competitive success as their ultimate motivation so I consider it the author's duty to examine and explain typical middlegame and endgame positions in as much (if not more) detail than the opening stage for they will generally be at least as important to the outcome of the game, if not more. This is difficult, because it can involve teaching chess generally rather than a particular opening. Still, I

suspect that most readers appreciate the effort. In any case, I find that well-played endgames are every bit as much the 'spirit of the Grünfeld' as the dashing, firework-inducing post-opening explosions that are commonly thought to be the opening's essence.

Finally, I hope this doesn't discourage you. That was not my aim. I accept that many readers will have a different view of what is valuable in chess or necessary for a whole-hearted appreciation of the game. Still, I have striven to be honest elsewhere in the book and my considered opinion is that if you are not currently interested in the latter stages of the game then you have a fantastic opportunity to enhance your understanding and joy of chess more than you can currently know. You simply have to open your mind to these positions. It is a small but magnificent step. Please give it a try.

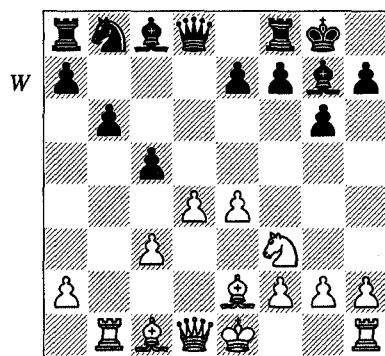
Game 16

Gretarsson – Dvoiryš

Leeuwarden 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 e4 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 ♗e2 b6!? (D)

A sensible move which blunts the rook on b1 and prepares to pressurize the centre with a double fianchetto. I like this move and have played it myself several times. If you have confidence in your abilities to outplay your opponents from unbalanced positions in which you have more experience than I whole-heartedly recommend it. However, I should say that I feel White



has good chances of maintaining an edge here and Black's play is much less combative than that the critical lines in Chapter 9.

10 0-0

10 h4!? ♗g4!? 11 ♚f1!? is GM Cebalo's idea, when 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 ♘c6! seems to give Black a good game.

10...♗b7 11 ♖d3

11 e5?! cxd4 12 cxd4 ♗d5! 13 ♖a4 ♘c6 14 ♗e3 ♖d7 15 ♖a3 and now:

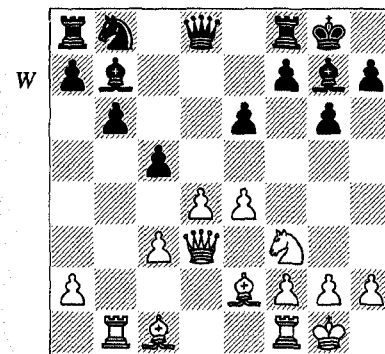
a) I suspect 15...e6?! would be a fairly typical mistake in this sort of position. It is important to secure firm control of d5 in such positions but ...e6 should only be played if necessary since otherwise it just weakens the f6- and d6-squares and the crucial ...f6 break becomes double-edged. Moreover, if White plays h4 in such positions it is very tempting to cement the kingside with ...h5 but usually this is a mistake since it gifts White the g5-square and Black's kingside pawns lose their flexibility; normally it is best to meet h4 with ...h6.

b) 15...f6! 16 exf6 exf6 (it's very difficult for White to find a good plan)

17 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 18 ♖bc1 ♖d6! 19 ♖a4 ♖f7! 20 h4 ♘e7 21 h5 ♘f5 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 ♖c3 ♗f8! 24 ♗c4 ♘e7! 25 ♖c2 ♖h7 26 ♖e4 ♗xc4 27 ♖xc4 ♖d5! 28 ♖xd5+ ♘xd5 gave Black a clear endgame advantage in Michela-kis-Rowson, Erevan OL 1996.

11...e6!? (D)

There are various ways of playing this position with ...♗a6 and ...♖d7 and while they may be reasonable from a theoretical perspective, I have always found them rather artificial.



12 ♗f4?!

This is definitely not the most testing but if such a natural-looking move is already a mistake, it suggests that Black's position is quite promising. Alternatively:

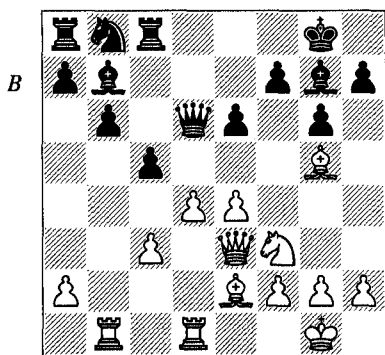
a) 12 dxc5?! ♖xd3 13 ♗xd3 ♘d7 is better for Black as White's pawns are very sickly and his pieces are not much better.

b) 12 ♖d1!? is a tricky move to face since the c1-bishop is ready to react to the placement of Black's pieces. However, the drawback is that the

white queen cannot tuck itself quite so comfortably on e3 since this will now block the c1-bishop. Hence, I recommend 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 ♗a6!? 14 ♖e3 ♖d7!. The queen has her sights set on the influential a4-square and answers to the call of the f8-rook, who is now less concerned about ♗a3. I'm not sure how often this exact position has occurred but my gut feeling is that Black can hold his own here, e.g. 15 d5 exd5 16 exd5? ♖e8!.

c) 12 ♗g5 is the most frequently played move and it demands considerable accuracy on Black's part. 12...♖d6 looks like the best move to me, but some strong players have tried to play with the queen on c7. I don't like this idea so much because opening the c-file is an important resource for Black, and I don't want my queen being given the eye by a white rook on c1. 13 ♖e3 (a tidy move, keeping the pieces flexible to wait for Black to play his hand) 13...♖c8! (it is rather peculiar to play this before developing the b8-knight or taking on d4 but it is good to prevent the exchange of dark-squared bishops and helpful to clear the f8-square for the black queen so that she has a comfortable resting place from a white rook on d1) 14 ♖fd1 (D) and then:

c1) Normally Black plays 14...cxd4 15 cxd4 ♘d7 (15...♘c6 16 h4! ♖f8 17 d5!) but it seems to me that 16 ♗b5 is now seriously annoying, and more so since I think it's the only seriously annoying move. After 16...♗c6 17 ♗a6 ♖e8 18 ♖dc1! the c-file is a major feature of the position and the bishop on



c6 is very loose. If Black can take on d4 and play ...♗f8 his position tends to be quite comfortable because he's very flexibly placed to meet White's main ideas and has plenty of prospects for counterplay. Note that although the black knight is more actively placed on c6 it is also much less secure and does not make a particularly logical pair with the fianchetto of the light-squared bishop. Indeed one of the main benefits of putting the knight on d7 here is the idea of playing ...♘f6 to create an annoyance against e4. It is also worth knowing that one of White's main ideas here is to soften up the black kingside by pushing the h-pawn and it is in Black's interest to be ready to meet h5 with ...h6 and ...g5, which tends to give White fewer attacking threats than other ideas. Hopefully the following will now speak for itself:

c2) 14...♘d7!? (this is my own idea) and now:

c21) 15 ♖b5 ♖c6 and then:

c211) 16 ♖a6 ♞e8 looks playable for Black.

c212) 16 dxc5 ♖xc5 holds together nicely for Black.

c213) 16 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 17 d5 exd5 18 exd5 ♗a4 leaves Black very well coordinated.

c22) 15 dxc5 ♖c7 shows a typical theme. In all such lines it is important to realize that, other things being equal, White emerging with an extra queenside pawn will almost always be counter-balanced by Black's open lines for all his pieces and the ease with which White's c- and a-pawns can be attacked compared to the sturdiness of the b6-pawn.

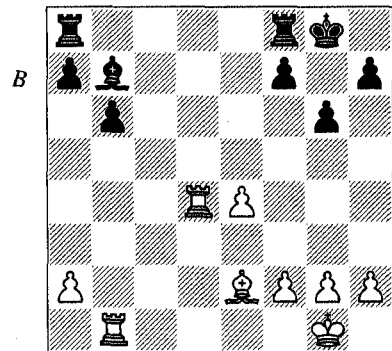
12...cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘c6!

Yes, I know I just said that this knight tends to be more comfortable on d7 in these lines, but Black has a particular idea in mind.

14 ♞fd1 ♘xd4!

A sweet tactic which leaves Black with a comfortable advantage.

15 ♘xd4 e5 16 ♖e3 exd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 19 ♞xd4 (D)



The following endgame is played so smoothly by Black that it is difficult

for me to say anything that is not self-evident. However, you are probably aware by now that I prefer to risk saying too much than too little and I cannot emphasize enough how beneficial it is for the Grünfeld player to have a good feeling for such endgames. Indeed, at international level I would say more; that it is important for Black to enjoy playing such positions!

Of course the advantage lies in the position of the kings. The a2-pawn is not a serious weakness in such a position and the queenside majority is only a greater asset than the kingside majority because both kings are on the kingside. Indeed, if White performed some sort of celestial castling here and ended up with the king on a1 then Black would have little to be excited about. The rest of the game vividly demonstrates that White's problem is much more dangerous than White's.

19...♞fd8 20 ♞bd1 ♞xd4 21 ♞xd4 ♖f8!

Centralizing the king is useful in preventing White's counterplay and supporting the black pieces.

22 f3 ♖e7 23 ♖c4 ♖c6

Simply intending to advance the pawns.

24 ♖f2 b5 25 ♖b3 a5 26 a3 ♞a7!

The seed of the first transition: Black prepares to exchange bishops and so remove the main blockader on the queenside.

27 ♖e3 ♖d7 28 ♞d2?

White is dithering and soon throws away his remaining drawing chances. Clearly Black has some advantage

and it will be a sizeable one if White cannot bring the king to the queenside. This is by no means an easy task since it is difficult to avoid the exchange of rooks in the process. White has to be ready to meet ...♖e6 with ♖xe6 followed by ♞d8 so it would seem that White could try 28 h4!? (a useful move – if the black rook takes on g2, h2 won't be attacked) 28...♖e6 (28...h5 is more precise, but after 29 g3 the same ideas apply, although White should refrain from playing f4) 29 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 (29...fxe6 30 ♞d1! intending ♖f4-e5 looks OK for White) 30 ♞d8 ♞b7 31 ♞a8 b4 32 axb4 axb4 33 ♖d2 b3 34 ♖c1 ♞c7+! 35 ♖b2 ♞c2+ 36 ♖xb3 ♞xg2. Black is still better, but I think White has made a favourable transformation.

28...♖e6 29 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 30 ♞d5?

This active-looking move may be the decisive mistake.

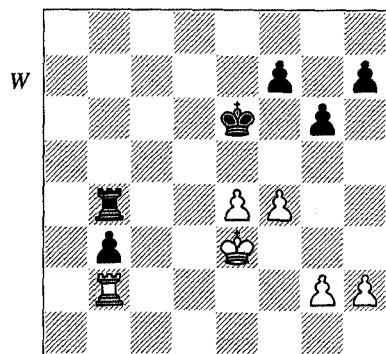
30 ♞b2 ♞b7 31 ♖d4 is more consistent and still offers some drawing chances. The white rook is passive, however, and Black still has many ways to improve his position, e.g. 31...♖d6 32 ♖c3 ♖c6!? 33 ♞d2 ♞d7.

30...♞b7 31 f4 b4 32 axb4 axb4 33 ♞d2

White must have miscalculated; at least I presume he hadn't intended to blockade this pawn with his rook.

33...b3 34 ♞b2 ♞b4! (D)

I suspect that White's position is now beyond repair. It seems there is no constructive way to change the position without dropping too much material, while Black has a very clear plan to create a weakness on the kingside,



and this will decisively over-stretch the white forces.

35 g3 f6 36 ♖d2

36 h4!? looks more tenacious.

36...g5 37 fxe5 fxe5 38 ♕c3 ♖b8!
39 ♕d4 g4!

A classic demonstration of the 'principle of two weaknesses' – the black b-pawn is so strong that it constitutes a 'weakness' in White's position, but it is only by creating a second weakness (h2) that Black can infiltrate decisively.

40 ♕e3

40 e5 ♖b7! is a painful zugzwang for White.

40...♕e5 41 ♖b1 b2 42 ♕d3 h5 43 ♕c2 ♕xe4 44 ♖e1+

At last White manages to make the rook active and use the king as a blockader, but Black has made too many gains and now has a tactical win.

44...♕f3 45 ♕b1 ♕g2 46 ♖e2+ ♕g1 47 ♖d2 ♖b5!

A pleasingly solid move with which to force White's resignation. Black's threat of ...♖f5-f2 is unstoppable.

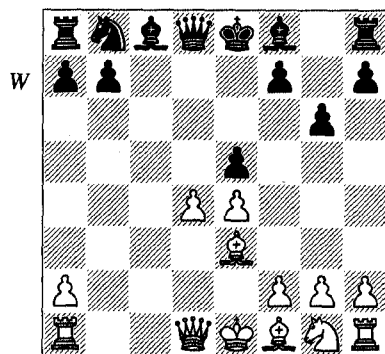
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Game 17
Hillarp Persson – Rowson
Edinburgh (2) 1997

1 d4 2 ♕f6 3 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5
4...xd5 5 e4 6 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 e5!?

More often than not this move-order has no significance, but if White intends to put a bishop on e3 or b5, then there are additional options.

7 ♖e3 cxd4 8 cxd4 e5! (D)



An unusual idea and an excellent surprise weapon. The undeveloped nature of White's kingside means that he has some difficulty dealing with checks on the a5-e1 diagonal and in most lines this enables Black to break up White's imposing centre.

9 ♖f3

This is not the most testing move. Others:

a) 9 dxe5 ♖a5+ 10 ♖d2 ♖xe5 11 ♖d3 ♖g7 12 ♖b1 ♖c6 13 ♖f3 ♖e7 14 0-0 0-0 is comfortable for Black.

b) 9 ♖b5+ and now:

b1) 9...♖c6 was played in L.B.Hansen-Djurić, Bled 1991: 10 ♖a4 (10

♖b1! looks much more testing to me) 10...♖d7 11 d5 ♖b4?! (11...♖a5+! 12 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 13 ♖b1 ♖xb5 14 ♖xb5 b6 leads to an endgame where I feel I would rather be Black since it will be easy to coordinate quickly, securely blockade the d-pawn and look forward to using the a- and b-pawns at a later stage) 12 ♖f3 f6 13 ♖b1. White held a clear advantage and won convincingly in only 22 moves.

I suspect this game put Black off playing this line but on seeing this game for the first time I felt there was much still to be explored.

b2) 9...♖d7!? is dismissed by Ftáčnik with the line 10 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 11 d5 with a slight advantage to White. One of my discoveries in this line was that this was a sloppy assessment as now Black can play the almost forcing 11...♖b4+ 12 ♖d2?! ♖h4!, which I can assure you is not to White's advantage. To be honest though, I suspect that 11 ♖b1! causes Black some opening problems here, although White is only slightly better so it may be worth taking this risk if you think your opponents will make an error earlier.

c) 9 ♖b1!? may also put Black's opening idea in jeopardy. I knew of the potential problems when I ventured 8...e5 so I hope this game serves as encouragement to those who occasionally like to take a little risk in the opening.

9...♖b4+ 10 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 11 ♖xd2 exd4 12 ♖xd4 0-0 13 ♖c4 ♖e8!

It is important for Black to keep on playing actively since insipid play will certainly give White the advantage:

13...♖d7 14 0-0 ♖b6 15 ♖b3 ♖d7 16 a4!

14 ♖f4

14 0-0 ♖xe4 leaves White frustrated. The solid 14 f3 is probably best met with 14...♖b6 15 0-0 ♖c6 16 ♖fd1 ♖e6!, which appears to equalize.

14...♖e7! 15 ♖d1 ♖a5+ 16 ♕f1 ♖c7!

It is useful to displace the white king but Black lags in development so immediately trying to exploit this is mistaken. 16...♖c6 17 ♖xc6 bxc6 18 ♖f6 ♖c7 19 ♖xf7+! is a case in point.

17 ♖xc7 ♖xc7

Now we have an endgame not dissimilar to Game 16. If Black can fully mobilize safely then he will have good long-term prospects, though the position is equal at this stage.

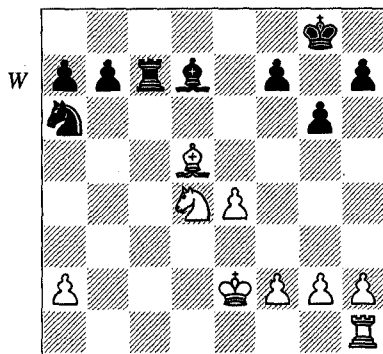
18 ♖d5 ♖d7 19 ♕e2 ♖a6 20 ♖c1

20 ♖b1 intending ♖b5 was worth considering. However, since the bishop works better when pawns are on both sides of the board and White is never likely to do better than liquidate the queenside, the best White could do here would be to achieve ♖+4♟ vs ♖+3♟ on the same side, which tends to be drawn anyway. So, not only does Black have little to fear, but it is fully possible to approach the position more positively and play for a win by eventually creating and nurturing a passed pawn on the queenside.

20...♖ac8 21 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 (D)

22 ♖b1?!

Starting a plan he wasn't committed to finishing. Exchanging one pair of rooks makes good sense because



the centralized king becomes more of an asset than a liability. But now White must find a plan and stick to it. 22 h4!? immediately was possible but after 22...h5 White should be advised to play with a great deal of vigour because now it is more difficult to create a passed pawn on the kingside. This is especially true if White continues with 23 f4, which absolutely commits White to keeping the pieces on the board; in the king and pawn endgame Black has one unit holding up two, i.e. h5 vs h4 and g2, and will therefore win with his 'extra' queenside pawn. However, White is not obliged to exchange pieces and Black must concentrate on warding off White's initiative. This I intended to do by 23...d4 24 e3 c5! and ...d6. These considerations led me to believe that Tiger should have played something like 22 d2 and offered a draw. However, there is no immediate reason for Black to accept the offer because White is the only side likely to be in any long-term danger.

22...b6 23 d2

23 d2 b5 e3xb5+ 24 fxb5 c2+ 25 e3 d7.

23...f8 24 h4!?

24 d2 b5 e3xb5 25 fxb5 e7 is very comfortable for Black.

24...h5! 25 f4?! c5!

Preventing f5 and preparing to exchange pieces.

26 c1?

A clear sign that things have gone wrong but also a bad mistake; with the kingside structure compromised White had to keep rooks on.

26 f1 was better, when 26...d7 27 e3 d2 b5 retains a slight edge. In saying all this, it was not too late for White to cut his losses with 26 d3 c7 27 d4 c5, etc. Black can try to play on for a win here with 26...c8 intending 27 e3 b7 d8 28 e6xb5+ 29 e3 d3+! but 28 e3 here leaves Black in a bit of a muddle.

26...xc1 27 xc1 e7 28 d2 d7 29 e3 d6

This is a critical moment where only an acute sense of danger will keep White in the game.

30 e6?

The first of two major errors by White. The passive 30 e2 keeps Black's advantage at a minimum and 30 e3 d4 31 e4 d4 e6 32 e5! also makes a draw the most likely result.

30...e6 31 d6??

31 a3 d6! 32 c3 c5 gives Black an active king and looks fairly grim for White, but was forced nonetheless.

31...e6 32 c3 d6 33 c4 a6

The placement of the kings means that the exploitation of the outside

passed pawn is not a trivial matter but all the variations demonstrate the simple principle in such positions – that the outside passed pawn acts as a decoy to the white king. This allows, in principle, Black to attack the white kingside pawns before White can defend them.

34 d4

34 g3! b5+ (34...c6 35 d4 intending e5-f6 complicates matters) 35 b4 c6 36 a5 b7 and now if White could play h3 and g4 the situation would not be so clear; indeed the placement of the kings would cause serious problems for Black! However, being unable to create a passed pawn in the normal manner means that White runs out of moves: 37 f5 gxf5! 38 exf5 f6! 39 a3 a7 40 g4 hxg4 41 h5 g3 and, after both pawns promote, 44...e1# is checkmate.

34...b5 35 e5+ c6 36 e4 a5 37 f5 b4 38 g4

A desperate bid to create a passed pawn. The calmer alternatives are no better:

a) 38 e6 gxf5+. It is important that this gives check.

b) 38 f6 g6 39 e6 a4!? (the alternative 39...d6 40 d4 e6 41 c5 is far too thought-provoking) 40 e7 d7 41 d3 e7 42 c4 b3 43 axb3 axb3 44 e3xb3 e6 45 c3 f5 46 d3 g4 47 e2 xh4 48 f2 g4 is an uncomplicated affair.

38...hxg4 39 e6 gxf5+ 40 e5 fxe6 0-1

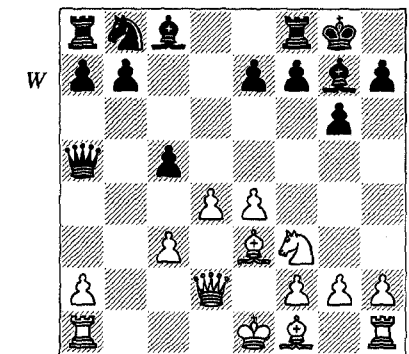
It is a cruel fact that an eventual ...a1+ will pick up the hopeful queen on h8.

Game 18

Hillarp Persson – Rowson

Edinburgh (4) 1997

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 d3 d5 4 cxd5 dxd5 5 e4 dxc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 e3 e6 8 d2 a5 9 f3 0-0 (D)



It is well worth obliging White to spend a move with his rook before capturing on d4.

10 c1

This move gives White's d-pawn some options, principally by means of advancing to d5; otherwise Black would quickly apply unbearable pressure on d4.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 xd2+ 12 d2

12 d2!? is a major alternative, against which I suggest 12...e6 restraining the centre and after 13 d3, 13...b6! restraining the knight and preparing to complete development. Then:

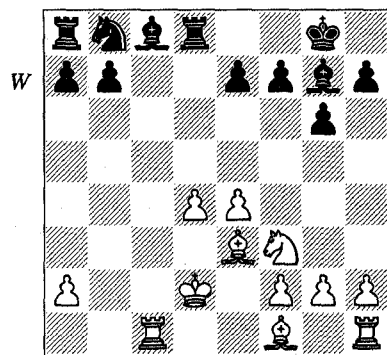
a) 14 e3 b5 e3 b7 15 f3 c8!? 16 xc8+ xc8 17 f2 d7 18 c1! f8! 19 e4 (19 e4 d7 d7 is just equal since the white rook doesn't

cause any lasting problems on the seventh rank) 19...e5! 20 dxe5 (20 ♖c4 exf4 21 ♖d5 ♘c6 22 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 23 ♖xc6 a5!) 20...♖xb5 21 ♖c8+ ♖e7 looks all right for Black, e.g. 22 ♖g8 ♖f8 23 ♖g5+ ♖e8 24 ♖h6 ♘d7.

b) 14 ♖d3!? is more common, and now I suggest 14...♖a6! is the best way to relieve Black's congestion. 15 ♖e2 ♖xd3+ 16 ♖xd3 ♘a6 is equal, but to highlight my point about winning such positions I advise you to consider the following game: 17 a3 ♖fd8 18 ♖c4 ♖f8 19 a4 ♖ab8 20 ♖e2 f6! (making room for the king; the d4-point is securely defended so there is no harm in blocking this diagonal) 21 ♖a1 ♖d6 22 h3 ♖f7 23 a5? (a bad move, but I have found that when playing such endgames the player who is more at ease with the position will tend to make fewer mistakes; Ivanchuk has mobilized well, and I guess White just couldn't handle the tension) 23...b5 24 ♖c3 ♖e8 25 ♖d1 ♘b4 26 ♘c5 ♖dc8 27 d5 exd5 28 exd5 a6! (it is impressive that Black feels so secure about leaving the knight stranded on b4) 29 ♘e4 (Black was intending to double rooks on the c-file) 29...♖xc3 30 ♘xc3 f5 31 ♖b6 ♖c8 32 ♘b1 ♖c2+ 33 ♖f3 ♖c5 34 ♖d2 ♖c1 35 ♘a3 ♖d7 0-1, Stone-Ivanchuk, New York Open 1988. White has been completely outplayed from a level endgame and decided it was time to resign.

12...♖d8! (D)

The most flexible move; Black immediately confronts the awkward position of the king on d2.



13 ♖c7

13 ♖b5 ♖d7! (the only move which I feel equalizes without any difficulty; 13...♖g4 and 13...♘c6 are also playable for those seeking more complex play) 14 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 15 ♖c7 ♘e5! is given as equal by Ftačnik, but Black has to play a few more accurate moves to equalize completely: 16 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 17 ♖xe7 ♖xd4 18 ♖xb7 is a case in point, because it seems to me that only 18...♖ac8! will do. Then 19 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 20 ♖e3 ♖a4 21 ♖a1 ♖c3+ 22 ♖f4 ♖ca3 23 ♖b2 h5! gives White fantastic opportunities to over-press, while Black has very few chances to lose!

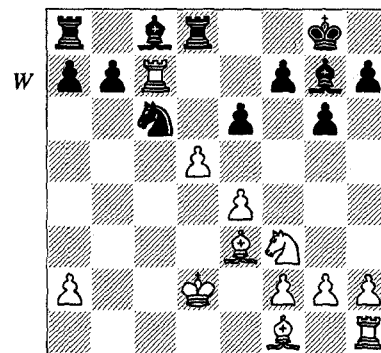
13 ♖e1!? is playable, but that's about all that can be said in its favour.

13...♘c6 14 d5 e6 (D)

15 ♖g5

15 ♘g5 and now:

a) Ftačnik suggests that White's 15th move is mistaken on account of 15...♖e5 16 ♖xf7 h6, which he gives as winning for Black. However, it looks to me like 17 ♘xe6 is actually much better for White since most lines



leave him with three pawns and an indestructible centre in return for the piece.

b) 15...exd5! looks like a more healthy approach; after 16 ♘xf7 ♖d7! 17 ♖xd7 ♖xd7, 18 exd5 ♖xf7 19 dxc6 ♖xc6 20 ♖c4+ ♖e8 is fine for Black so 18 ♘d6! so is the only way for White to try for an edge. However this is very risky since 18...♖e6! 19 ♘xb7 ♖b8 20 ♘d6 ♖b2+ looks fantastic for Black.

15...f6 16 ♖c1 fxe5!

This may have been a novelty at the time, but I was following Ftačnik's analysis based on his game as Black against Kotlyar in Reno 1991, which went 16...exd5 17 exd5 ♘b4 18 ♖c4! b5 19 ♖b3 fxe5 20 d6+ ♖h8 21 ♘g5 ♘d3+ 22 ♖b1 ♘e5 23 f4 ♘c4 24 ♘f7+ and White had the better of the complications.

17 dxc6 g4!

An important move which my opponent had misunderstood. 17...bxc6 18 ♖c4 g4 19 ♘g5 ♖e5 20 ♖xc8! is a different matter entirely.

18 ♖c4?!

18 ♘g5 ♖e5 19 cxb7 ♖xb7 20 ♖xb7 ♖ac8+ 21 ♖c4 ♖xc4+ 22 ♖b1 was a better try, but obviously Black still has the better chances.

18...gxf3 19 cxb7 ♖h6+! 20 ♖c2

In view of 20 ♖b1 ♖b8 21 ♖xc8 ♖xb7+ 22 ♖a1 ♖g7+ 23 e5 ♖xe5#, White must wander with his king.

20...♖xb7 21 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 22 ♖xb7 fxe2 23 ♖g1 ♖d2+ 24 ♖b3 ♖xf2

I think this is the deepest I have ever gone with Grünfeld preparation. Ftačnik suggests that Black has an edge here, but both players felt that White was totally lost.

25 e5 ♖d8!

Using all the pieces. This game is a good example of the dangers present for White's centralized king in these late middlegames.

26 ♖d7 ♖g7! 27 ♖c6

27 e6 ♖b2+ 28 ♖a4 ♖xb7 29 e7 ♖bxd7 was an important sequence to see.

27...♖xe5 28 ♖xg2 ♖d3+

Perhaps I missed a mating sequence around here, but I was quite content about safely winning three pawns!

29 ♖c4 ♖c3+ 30 ♖b5 a6+ 31 ♖a5 ♖a3+ 32 ♖b4 ♖d6+ 33 ♖c4 ♖xg2 34 ♖xg2 ♖xa2 35 ♖c6 ♖xh2 36 ♖d5 ♖e2 37 ♖a7 a5 38 ♖d7 ♖e5+ 39 ♖d6 ♖g7 40 ♖e6+ ♖h6 41 ♖e7 ♖g5 42 ♖f7 ♖h4 43 ♖a6 g5 0-1

Game 19

Yusupov – Khalifman

Ubeda 1997

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 ♖g7 7 ♖e3

c5 8 ♖d2 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♘c6 10 ♖d1 ♗a5 11 ♗xa5 ♘xa5 12 ♙d3 0-0 13 ♘e2 ♙d7 14 ♖b1!

This concrete move carries the annoying threat of ♙d2 and so forces a significant weakness in Black's queenside.

14...b6 15 ♖d2!

Naturally, the king should be kept in the centre. White can use the c-file to exchange at least one pair of rooks so the king is not in any particular danger.

15...♖fc8 16 ♙a6!

A tangible reward for White's 14th move. Black will now be seriously inconvenienced as he tries to challenge for the c-file.

16...♖d8

16...♘c4+? loses material after 17 ♖d3.

17 ♖hc1 ♙c8 18 ♙d3!

White has more space so it makes sense to make Black work hard to exchange pieces.

18...♙b7 19 ♖c7 ♖ac8 20 ♖bc1 ♖xc7 21 ♖xc7 ♖c8!

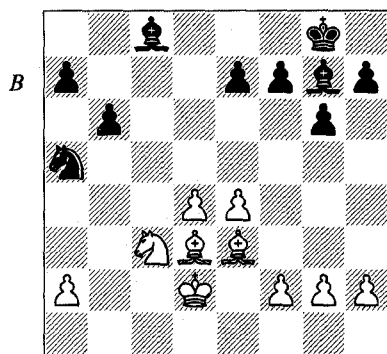
Black takes advantage of the fact that White cannot capture on e7 without allowing serious counterplay.

22 ♖xc8+!

22 ♖xe7 ♙f8 23 ♖e5 is possible, but 23...♙b4+ 24 ♖d1 ♙d6 25 ♖b5 ♙a6 26 ♖b3 is not easy to see and Black has other ways of trying to unsettle White.

22...♙xc8 23 ♘c3 (D)

Yusupov's moves, combined with his notes in *Informator*, strongly suggest that White has a clear advantage here. White's advantage in space allows



him to create play on both sides of the board and his active king prevents any counterplay against the centre. Moreover, the a7-pawn is rather weak; indeed much weaker than the pawn on a2!

So where did Black go wrong? I think the opening line is probably not the best and is largely to blame, but secondly Khalifman seemed to be playing without any particular purpose and probably under-estimated the dangers in a position he seemed to embrace freely. Note that this position is very different to the last two endgames because then Black had some counterplay, or was less pressurized because there had been an early exchange of centre pawns.

23...♘c6 24 ♘b5 ♙a6 25 ♖c3!

Again Yusupov opts to keep control. 25 ♘xa7 ♙xd3 26 ♘xc6 ♙xe4 27 ♘xe7+ ♖f8 28 ♘c8 ♙xg2 29 ♘xb6 is needlessly unaesthetic and offers Black good counter-chances.

25...♖f8 26 a4!?

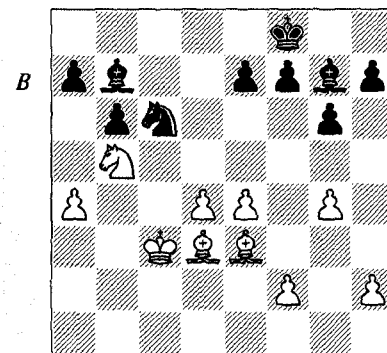
I'm sure Yusupov wanted to play 26 g4 here, but although he doesn't

mention it I suspect he wanted to avoid 26...f5!?, which would at least be unsettling for White.

26...♙b7

26...h5!, to prevent White's next, was a better way to defend. Indeed, I advise all Grünfeld players to be attentive to the importance of this move in such endgames.

27 g4! (D)



I'm not at all surprised that Yusupov gives an unexplained exclamation mark here. This move is a very significant gain for White in such endgames but it's also the type of move which is obvious to some and unappreciated by others. I suspect the best way to look at it is to consider that the winning strategy in such positions normally involves using the extra space to push Black's pieces onto sub-optimal squares and so the more imposing White's space advantage is, the more difficult Black will find it to place his pieces in such a way so as to prevent infiltration. Moreover, it is unlikely that White will be able to win the game by

crudely winning a queenside pawn or queening a passed d-pawn. Indeed, White needs to find a way to overstretch the black defences and this will probably require that White creates a weakness in the black kingside. Believe it or not, one of the ideas of g4 is to make the black h- and f-pawns long-term vulnerabilities, as we see in the game. If Black could simply lift the h-pawns from the board, his defence would be eased considerably, which is why 26...h5 would have helped a lot.

27...♖e8 28 ♙c4 ♘b8 29 ♖d3 a6

Black cannot avoid having some weakness on the queenside, and now White switches attention from a7 to b6.

30 ♘c7+ ♖d8 31 ♘d5 ♘d7 32 ♘b4!

A rewarding dance; now White attacks f7 and a6 so Black has to make a major compromise.

32...a5 33 ♙d5!

Not only has Yusupov achieved a 'one unit holding up two' situation on the queenside, but he has also created major light-square entry points there, which are made all the more accessible by the exchange of light-squared bishops.

33...♙xd5 34 ♘xd5 e6 35 ♘c3 ♖c7 36 ♘b5+ ♖c6 37 ♖c4 ♙f8 38 ♙f4 ♙b4 39 f3 ♙f8 40 d5+

Notice how thoroughly this move was prepared; Black was offered no chances for counterplay.

40 g5!? and 40 ♙d6!? are also possible but I think the transition which follows is the most convincing.

40...exd5+ 41 exd5+ ♖b7 42 ♗d6+!
♙xd6 43 ♙xd6

The bishop dominates the knight and White has given Black weaknesses on both sides of the board.

43...g5

The only move, as White threatened to put Black in zugzwang by playing g5.

44 ♙g3

White intends to put the king on b5, the pawn on d6 and the bishop on d4 which, if allowed, would be enough to force Black into zugzwang.

44...♗f6 45 ♙e5 ♗d7 46 ♙d4 ♖c7
47 ♖b5 f6

47...♗d6 48 ♙xb6 ♗xb6 49 ♖xb6
♗xd5 50 ♖xa5 ♖c5 51 ♖a6 ♖c6 52
a5 f6 53 ♖a7 ♖c7 54 a6 h6 55 h3! in-
structively shows the benefit of stor-
ing up pawn move passes for important
transformations such as this.

48 ♙f2 ♗d6 49 ♙xb6 ♗e5 50
♙xa5 ♗xf3 51 ♙c3 1-0

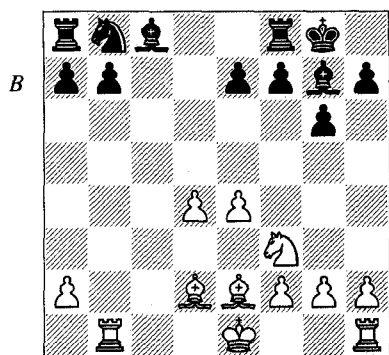
A beautifully controlled game by Yusupov against a world-class grandmaster. This should serve as a warning that Black should not be complacent in Exchange Grünfeld endgames and is also a demonstration of how completely useless the 'queenside majority' can be shown to be.

Game 20

Hertneck – Kasparov

Munich 1994

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 exd5
♗xd5 5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♗f3
c5 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 ♙e2 cxd4 10 cxd4
♖a5+ 11 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 12 ♙xd2 (D)



This line has been out of fashion ever since White discovered how difficult it was for Black in the sharper lines with 11 ♙d2. Nonetheless, I am somewhat surprised that it is not tried more often, for Black has to be fairly accurate to secure equality. Moreover, at club level the uninitiated may well remember 8 ♖b1 but when confronted with 10...♖a5+ would perhaps be reluctant to lose the a2-pawn. Once again the absence of queens does not make the position in any sense 'drawish'; there is as much scope here to outwit your opponent as there is in any other position.

12...b6!

Many sources recommend 12...e6 but it seems to me that it is probably a little overambitious to play ...e6 and ...b6 when White has a significant lead in development. It looks better to connect the rooks and allow White to advance in the centre with the aim of quickly undermining it before a grip is established. Furthermore, Kasparov played 12...e6 against Karpov in one of the Seville world championship

match games (1987) but now prefers the immediate 12...b6. I suspect this may be in view of the line 12...e6 13 0-0 b6 14 ♖bc1! ♙b7 15 ♙b4 ♗d8 16 ♙b5!, which leaves White with an enduring initiative. Then 16...♙a6 17 a4 ♙xb5 18 axb5 a6 is often given as equal, but 19 bxa6 ♗xa6 20 ♙c3 looks somewhat unpleasant for Black, mainly in view of his weak b-pawn.

13 d5!?

I think this is the critical test. The following three lines should give you some feel for these positions. Basically, it tends to be a good idea for Black to exchange some pieces, centralize the king and hit the centre with ...e6 or ...f5 whenever possible.

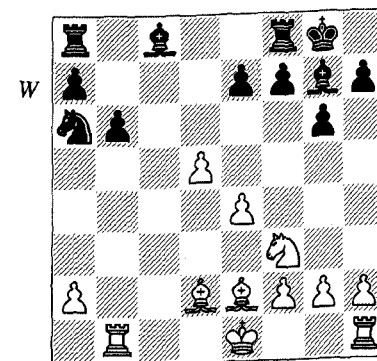
a) 13 0-0 ♙b7 14 d5 ♖c8!? was Judit Polgar's interpretation against Piket, Madrid 1997. The idea is to be able to protect the e-pawn with the black king. That game continued 15 ♙b4 ♖f8 16 ♗fd1 ♗a6 17 ♙xa6 ♙xa6 18 e5 ♙e2. Now Piket played the over-hasty 19 d6? (19 ♖e1 is approximately equal) and after 19...♙xd1 20 dxe7+ ♖e8 21 ♖xd1 he had probably missed that Black could exchange rooks by 21...♙h6!, after which Black won quickly.

b) 13 ♙d3 ♗d8 14 ♙e3 ♗c6 15 d5 e6! 16 ♙g5 f6 gave Black a slight plus in Novik-Lputian, Kharkov 1985.

c) 13 ♖c1 ♙b7 14 d5 ♗a6 15 ♙g5 ♖fc8! 16 0-0 ♖f8 17 e5 h6 18 ♙h4 g5 19 ♙g3 ♖xc1 20 ♖xc1 ♗c5 21 d6 ♗d8 was equal in Pavlović-Mikhalchishin, Trnava 1988; Black is well coordinated and White's centre is not threatening.

13...♗a6! (D)

One of my first ever Grünfelds went 13...♙a6?! 14 ♖c1! ♙xe2 15 ♖xe2 ♗a6 16 ♖c4 and I was already in big trouble since I had failed to challenge the c-file or attack the centre. This was an important lesson to learn, for, like many other players, I was rather hung up on the idea that a queenside majority was a winning asset in the endgame.



14 ♙e3

14 ♙b5!? ♙b7 15 0-0 ♗c5 16 ♖fe1 ♖fc8! 17 ♙b4 ♖c7! 18 a4 f5! gave Black good counterplay in Zimmerman-Nadanian, Katowice 1992 – Black will have a ragged pawn-structure but very active pieces and White will be left without a centre.

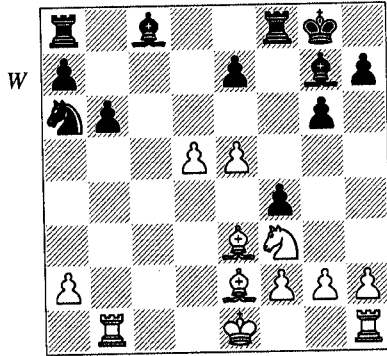
14...f5!?

The World Champion uses a highly aggressive approach, which he had presumably prepared thoroughly. The alternative 14...♙c3+!? also appears promising for Black: 15 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 16 ♗xd2 ♗c5 17 f3 e6.

15 e5

There is no obvious improvement but now White's lead in development has become a lag!

15...f4! (D)



Kasparov hits hard before White gets time to mobilize fully.

16 ♖d4 ♗f5! 17 ♜c1 ♝b4!

Every move carries a big threat.

18 ♗c4 ♞d3+ 19 ♝d2

19 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 looks equally hopeless for White; his centre will collapse and Black will be left with an extra pawn and the two bishops.

19...♞xc1 20 ♜xc1 ♜fc8 21 d6+ ♝f8 22 ♞g5 exd6 23 ♞xh7+ ♝e8 24

♗b5+ ♝d8 25 ♜d1 dxe5 26 ♗c3 ♜xc3!

Keeping total control.

27 ♝xc3+ ♝e7 28 ♞g5 ♜c8+ 29 ♝b3 ♗c2+ 0-1

Kasparov did not play this endgame like a man who was resigned to a draw by any means. There was easily enough tension in the position to create problems for Grandmaster Hertneck.

Conclusion

1) Most of the so-called 'drawish endgames' offer plenty of scope to out-play your opponent with either colour.

2) Be wary of the notion that the queenside majority is necessarily an advantage. As with most positional generalizations, it is less important than which side is controlling the game.

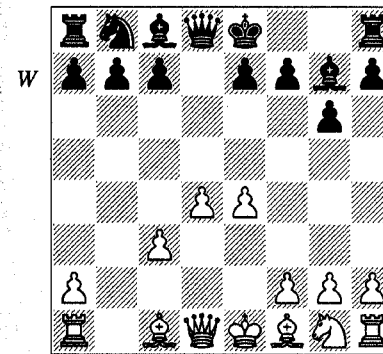
3) It tends to be easier to make use of the queenside majority when the black e-pawn has been exchanged for the white d-pawn. This is probably because Black's king has better access to the queenside but also because White's extra space is less imposing, which makes it more difficult for White to dictate events.

8 "Check!"

"Many people would sooner die than think. In fact they do." – Bertrand Russell

Game 21
Salov – Leko
Belgrade 1996

1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♞xd5 5 e4 ♞xc3 6 bxc3 ♗g7 (D)



7 ♗b5+

7 ♜a4+!? is a less dangerous check for Black because it doesn't aid White's development. However, Black should play carefully against such moves because White is probably not yet worse and so any early notions of 'punishment' would probably be misguided. That's not to say you need to be theoretically armed to the teeth, but just that you should pay attention to details and not be complacent. Here is one way to exploit the off-side nature of

the queen: 7...♞d7 8 ♞f3 0-0 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗e3 c5 11 ♜c1 e5! gave Black good play in Deže-Kožul, Pula 1989.

7 ♗a3 is a simple move directed against ...c5. This is a perfectly respectable aim, and a good argument for playing 6...c5 before ...♗g7. However, although the move is not at all bad, it is no serious threat to Black if it's taken seriously. 7...♞d7 (a nice cosy-looking move but it is fully possible to play with an early ...b6 instead) 8 ♞f3 c5! (Black threatens ...cxd4 and ...♜a5+ so it's worth doing this before castling since then White would have time for ♗e2 and 0-0) 9 ♜b3 0-0 10 ♜d1 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♞f6! 12 ♗d3 ♗g4! is a powerfully thematic way to continue. Now 13 ♜xb7 ♞xf3 14 gxf3 ♜xd4 15 0-0 ♜e5 16 ♗xe7 ♜fb8 gives Black excellent chances against the white king.

7...♗d7!?

7...c6 8 ♗a4 is much more fashionable and probably a more critical test of White's opening idea. However, I think that 7...♗d7 is fully playable, and teaches us more about typical Grünfeld positions. It also contains very similar ideas to Game 16, so these games are worth studying together. However, I would like to draw your attention to an article by Timman

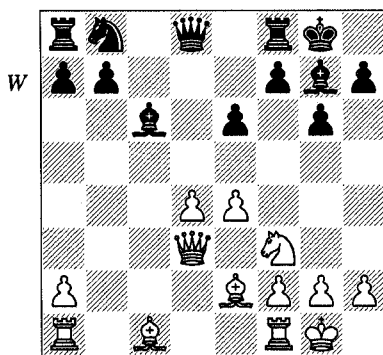
in *New in Chess* magazine no. 3, 1998, in which he discusses 8...0-0 9 ♖e2 c5 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♙e3 ♘a5!?. This was the approach by taken by Svidler and Kasparov against Topalov in Linares 1998 and now after 12 ♖b1 Timman says that 12...b6 is "The normal move every experienced Grünfeld player would play without much thought. That White can win a pawn with 13 dxc5 should not worry Black. It is one of the strategic characteristics of the Grünfeld that Black can allow captures on c5 and b6, as this gives White weak a- and c-pawns, which will find themselves under considerable pressure, because Black controls these two half-open lines."

My first thought is that there is a certain logic to Black's opening play which highlights that White's bishop on a4 does not control c4. Secondly, you can see several examples of Timman's sentiments throughout this book (e.g. Game 16) but you might be more willing to believe this higher authority! An important variation is now 13...♙a6! 14 ♙b5 ♙xb5 15 ♖xb5 ♘c4 16 ♙g5 ♗c7! 17 ♗a4 ♘a5 18 ♗a3 ♗e5! which "solves Black's positional problems" according to Timman.

If 12 dxc5!? Black can equalize with 12...♘c4! 13 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♙g5 ♙d7! 15 ♙b3 ♘a5!, when 16 ♙xe7 ♖e8 17 ♙d6 ♖xe4 18 ♘d4 ♘xb3 19 axb3 ♙xd4 was agreed drawn in Topalov-Kasparov, Linares 1998.

8 ♙e2 c5 9 ♘f3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♙c6 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 0-0 e6! (D)

The generic position for this line. White has the typical central space



advantage but Black is very solid and is quite flexibly placed while exerting a reasonable amount of pressure in the centre.

13 ♙g5!?

This is the most popular move but White has important alternatives:

a) 13 ♙f4?! – it seems that the bishop is rarely well placed here in these exchange structures. It tends not to do terribly much to disturb Black and is vulnerable to the ...e5 break. After 13...♘d7 14 ♖ac1 (14 ♙d6 ♖e8 15 e5 ♘b6! and 14 ♗e3 ♘f6 15 ♘d2 ♗e7 are no problem for Black) 14...♘f6 15 ♘d2 ♗e7 16 ♗e3 ♖fd8 Black has equalized, but it is well worth playing through the following route to appreciate the potential energy in the black position. 17 ♙e5 ♙f8!? (I like this idea a lot: Black intends to play ...♘d7 without exchanging bishops but also has the idea of controlling the a3-f8 diagonal and possibly exchanging queens on a3 at a later stage) 18 ♘b3 ♘d7 19 ♙f4 ♗a3! 20 ♖fd1 ♖e8! 21 ♖c2 e5! 22 dxe5 ♘xe5 23 f3 f5 24 ♗c3 ♙g7 25 ♙c1?! ♗e7 26 f4 ♙xe4!

27 fxе5 ♙xc2 28 ♗xc2 ♖ac8 29 ♙c4+ ♘h8 30 ♖d5 ♗h4! 31 ♘d2 ♖xe5 32 g3 ♗e7 0-1 Beliavsky-Ivanchuk, Dortmund 1995. After 33 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 White cannot avoid the loss of a piece.

b) 13 ♖b1!? is an annoying move which is designed, primarily, to prevent ...♘d7. 13...a6!? now seems best, as suggested by Ivanchuk. On the one hand it weakens the black queenside, but ...♙b5 and ...b5 can be useful resources. The game is likely to continue 14 ♙g5 ♗d6 15 ♗e3 with very similar themes to those in the game. Note that 13...♘d7? 14 ♙a3 ♖e8 15 d5! is a severe blow for Black, but 13...♖e8!? looks worth considering.

c) 13 ♙a3 ♖e8 14 ♘e5!?! was played against your author by T.Balogh at the world junior championship in 1997. I considered the ending after exchanging on e5 and d3 but I didn't like the look of it for Black due to White's massive space advantage and the scope of his two bishops. However, I should have considered 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 ♘d7! since it would seem that the black queen is a little more useful than White's. 16 ♙d6 ♗a5 17 ♗d4! (17 f4 ♘c5!) 17...♖ec8 leaves the position fairly unclear, but Black has to play purposefully (for example, exchange rooks or light-squared bishops) or else he will be slowly strangled on the dark squares. Of course, if Black can exchange off White's dark-squared bishop he has an obvious structural advantage. I played 14...♗a5!?, which is very ambitious because White has dangerous ideas of ♘c4-d6. The game continued 15 ♘c4 ♗a4 (15...♗a6!?)

16 ♖ab1 ♙b5 (16...♖d8!?! may be an important improvement) 17 ♖b4 ♗a6 18 ♖fb1 ♙xc4 19 ♖xc4 ♘c6 20 ♖cc1 ♗xd3 21 ♙xd3 ♙xd4 22 ♖xb7 ♘e5 23 ♙e2 ♖ab8 and I had a little initiative but White had good long-term prospects due to his two bishops.

13...♗d6!?

Leko thinks that 13...♗a5 may be an improvement, but I don't think Black has any serious problems in any case.

14 ♗e3

According to Leko, White now has a small but enduring advantage since it is difficult for Black to find counterplay. I suspect he may have been unduly influenced by the outcome of this game, however, and I think his play over the next few moves can be tightened up considerably.

14...♘d7

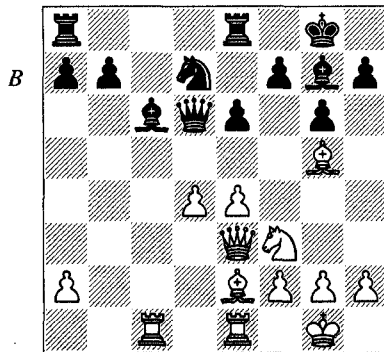
14...♖e8!?! may be worth playing first, so as to answer h4 with ...♗f8. The main idea of this manoeuvre is to answer h4-h5 with ...h6! and ...g5, closing the kingside. Moreover, the black pieces are well enough placed (queen on f8, rook on e8 and knight on d7) to consider the ...f5 break, often in conjunction with ...h6 and ...g5. Of course, such exposure should not be undertaken lightly.

15 ♖ac1 ♖fe8 16 ♖fe1 (D)

16...♖ac8

None of the commentators said anything of this move, but I feel it is too automatic.

16...♗f8! looks more purposeful to me because now Black plans the annoying ...♘f6 and 17 ♙f4 e5! is



possible since there is no h6-pawn *en prise*. Note however, that ... f6 can sometimes be met by e5! , which may tactically defend the e-pawn. Also, $16... \text{f8!}$ should be considered.

At any rate, I don't think that ... ac8 was a priority at this stage.

17 h4!

GM Movsesian makes the point that White will have to transform play from the centre to the flanks to win and so it helps to provoke some weaknesses on the kingside.

17... wf8!

$17... \text{f8!}$?, à la Ivanchuk, may also be worth considering, e.g. 18af4 wa3 .

18 af1!

The sharp variations seem to be in Black's favour: 18h5 h6 19hxg6 hxg5 20dxc5 fxg6 21wh3 wf4! 22wh7+ (22dxe6 wh6!) $22... \text{cf8}$ 23wxcg6 axd4! .

18... h6!

$18... \text{f6}$ is strongly met by 19de5! .

19 af4 df6

$19... \text{cfh7!}$? is suggested by Leko. It does look more flexible, and maybe

Black has ideas of ... f5 . However, it looks like White already has good control of the game in any case.

20 ae5!

A strong move, which tactically defends the e-pawn and so ties Black down.

20... aed8

$20... \text{a4!}$? looks a bit random, but Black has some thought-provoking designs on the c2-square and looks flexible enough to deal with White's main ideas.

21 wf4! ? we7 22 ec3! dh5 23 we3 df6 24 wf4 dh5 25 wc1! xe5

As I've said before, this change in structure invariably favours the side who has control of the game, which in this case is clearly White, who has good chances of targeting Black's weak spots on h6, f6, d6 and a7. However, $25... \text{df6}$ 26ab5! again pin-points the drawback of playing ... ac8 .

26 dxe5 ch7 27 we3?!

After the game, Leko pointed out that White missed the fairly devastating idea of 27dh2 intending dg4 . Black cannot take on h4 due to g4 and hh3 .

27... b6?!

This effectively forces Black to exchange rooks.

$27... \text{a6!}$ was better, when it is not obvious how White retains the advantage: 28ec1 wd7 29ed3 (29ae2 dg7 30ed3 wc7 31cd4 wxe5 32dxc6 bxc6 33exd8 exd8 34axa6 is similar) $29... \text{wc7}$ 30cd4 wxe5 31dxc6 bxc6 32exd8 exd8 33axa6 df6 34f3 with approximate equality. Another benefit of playing these lines

with ... d7-c6 is that Black's position is very resilient.

28 ec1 ab7 29 exc8 exc8

$29... \text{exc8}$ 30g3 is clearly better for White.

30 exc8 exc8 31 g3 dg7 32 cd2!

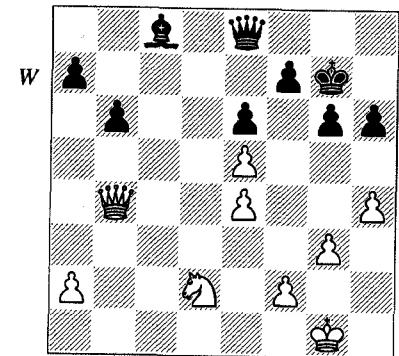
The knight is aiming at the d6-square.

32... de8 33 wd4! wd7 34 wb4 cg7 35 ab5! wd8 36 axe8!

A well-judged transition.

36... wxe8 (D)

A position well worth avoiding. The queen and knight tend to cooperate much better than queen and bishop because they can combine long-range and short-range effectiveness. Moreover, the weakened dark squares on d6 and f6 provide excellent anchorage for the knight, whereas the bishop has little to do. It is especially important that White has an extra kingside pawn because this provides safety for his own king while effectively suffocating



Black's. Salov is renowned for his iron technique and since the position is no longer heavily thematic from Black's point of view, I will give the remaining moves without comment.

37 dc4 wc6 38 cd6 wc1+ 39 ch2! ed7 40 wb3! f5! ? 41 exf6+ cxf6 42 wf3+ ce5 43 df7+ cd4 44 wf6+ cxe4 45 wxcg6+ cd4 46 wg7+ ce4 47 cd6+ cf3 48 wxd7 cxf2 49 wf7+ 1-0

9 The Cake and the Cookie

"We fail far more often by timidity than by over-daring." – David Grayson

I had great difficulty in writing this chapter, so please don't be discouraged if you have some difficulty in reading it! It is certainly quite dense analytically and you will have to wade through several variations and cross reference considerably if you want to make full sense of what follows. Still, I trust that if you take time to do so, the rewards will be plentiful since for several years now the line we are about to consider has been thought to be the main line and critical test of the Grünfeld.

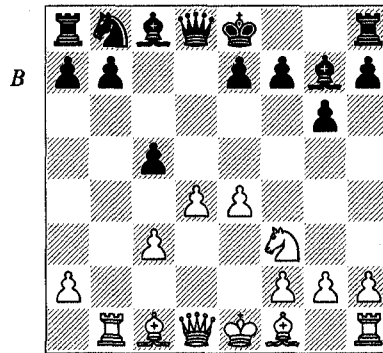
In fact, Grandmaster Mikhailchishin recently wrote that 80% of games in the Grünfeld are now played in the following variation. I suspect this statistic refers to a doctored sample of games between grandmasters in recent years, but even so it suggests that this line is considered to be the main testing ground for the very conception of the opening, so it is worth knowing at least a little of what follows!

Game 22

Kramnik – Kasparov

Linares 1998

1 $\text{d}f3$ $\text{c}5$ 2 $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}f6$ 3 $\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}5$ 4 $\text{cxd}5$
 $\text{dxd}5$ 5 $\text{d}4$ $\text{dxc}3$ 6 $\text{bxc}3$ $\text{g}6$ 7 $\text{e}4$ $\text{d}g7$
 8 $\text{b}b1$ (D)



This is a remarkably effective move which was almost considered a refutation of the Grünfeld in the 1980s and early 1990s. It doesn't directly aid White's development and does not look like a nightmare-inducing scary monster by any means. Yet, its popularity persists and it is now the main battleground between top-class grandmasters. Indeed, since Black has begun to find ways to neutralize this approach, I think it is no coincidence that Kasparov has once again brought the Grünfeld back to the forefront of his repertoire and many GMs like Sutovsky, Polgar and Shirov seem to have converted to the Grünfeld from the King's Indian.

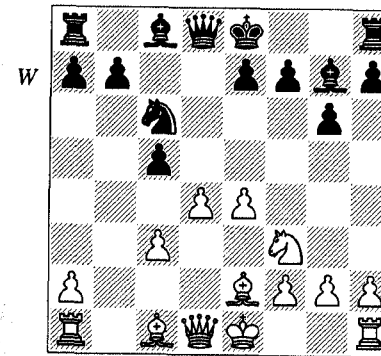
But what's all the fuss about; why is this little side-shuffle such a big deal?

And why did it take Black so long to find effective antidotes?

By this stage in the book you will no doubt be aware that Black's opening strategy tends to be successful only when White is not given a free hand to dominate the centre and switch play to the wings at will. Indeed, we have seen that it is imperative to keep on attacking the centre almost as if one were persistently trying to break down a door.

I think of 8 $\text{b}b1$ as being a prophylactic measure directed against Black's forthcoming onslaught. Indeed, "Paul the wannabe chess player", whom I mentioned earlier, referred to 8 $\text{b}b1$ as "consolidatory".

To make sense of this it helps to consider the following variations after 8 $\text{d}e2$ $\text{d}c6!$ (D):



a) 9 $\text{d}5$ $\text{dxc}3+$ 10 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{dxa}1!$ (Hint hint!) 11 $\text{Wxa}1$ $\text{d}d4$ 12 $\text{dxd}4$ $\text{cxd}4$ 13 $\text{Wxd}4$ 0-0 14 0-0 (14 $\text{d}h6$ $\text{Wa}5+$ 15 $\text{cf}1$ $\text{f}6$) 14... $\text{f}6$ 15 $\text{d}c4$ (15 $\text{e}5$ $\text{fxe}5$ 16 $\text{Wxe}5$ $\text{Wd}6!$) 15... $\text{d}d7$ 16 $\text{b}b1$ $\text{b}5$ 17 $\text{d}b3$ $\text{a}5$ gives White some

compensation for the exchange but clearly it is not more than enough.

b) 9 $\text{d}e3$ $\text{d}g4!$ (Hint hint!) 10 $\text{e}5$ 0-0 11 0-0 $\text{cxd}4$ 12 $\text{cxd}4$ $\text{Wd}7$ 13 $\text{Wd}2$ $\text{Wfd}8$ 14 $\text{Wfd}1$ $\text{Wac}8$ leaves Black with the better chances since the centre is no longer flexible and White has no obvious plan.

White is seeking to develop his knight on f3, where it bolsters the d4 point and also controls e5. The bishop is well placed on e2 since it is not as vulnerable to attack as it is on c4, and on d3 it is somewhat clumsy and may block an important defender of d4.

In life we learn that we cannot have a cake and eat it for the simple reason that once we have eaten it we no longer have it, except perhaps in a less picturesque form inside of ourselves. In chess, it seems to me that the difficulty lies in having a cake without letting your opponent take it away from you, for then it would surely be eaten and you wouldn't have it in any shape or form.

The above lines demonstrate that White cannot have his proverbial cake in the centre without offering Black at least a nibble. Black obviously wants his fair share and will seek it out with ... $\text{d}c6$ and ... $\text{d}g4$. Although Black has other ways of developing (... $\text{b}b6$ and ... $\text{d}b7$ or ... $\text{d}d7$ and ... $\text{e}5$) there is no other way to confront White's 'ideal' set-up. Hence, knowing that the desirable set-up cannot be achieved immediately, White seeks a way to prevent Black's main sources of counterplay. $\text{b}b1$ discourages ... $\text{d}g4$ due to the attack on b7 and discourages

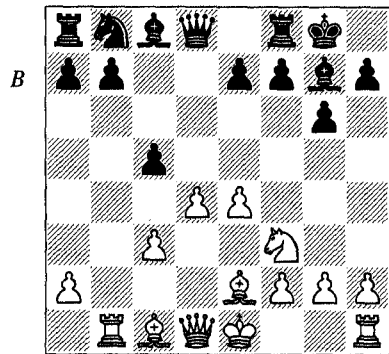
...♘c6 since after d5 hitting the knight and gaining central space Black can only take a pawn on c3 while losing some time; he cannot also take a rook on a1 to make the long journey more worthwhile.

So, White is seeking the ideal centre with pawns on e4 and d4 supported by the knight on f3 and 'tidy' bishop on e2. ♚b1 effectively prevents Black's primary sources of counterplay and so a sustained assault against the white centre becomes very difficult. We have seen that counterplay against the centre is essential for success on the black side of the Grünfeld and now we see the problem with ♚b1.

8...0-0

Black is well advised to castle here since, if nothing else, in the sharp lines which follow ...0-0 is more useful to Black than ♗e2 is to White.

9 ♗e2 (D)



This position is now a fairly major cross-roads. We were given a taster of 9...♘c6 in Game 7 and I suggested that 9...b6 is a playable alternative

here in Game 16. However, I am about to recommend an approach which seeks to ignore the 'cake' in the centre that White sought to have with ♚b1. I am willing to accept that it is now difficult for Black to eat White's central cake without choking and so this is a rare occasion where I feel that Black is best advised, at least for a few moves, to decline to fight in the centre. This is not a complete admission of defeat, however, for as White jealously guards his cake, Black can grab an important cookie.

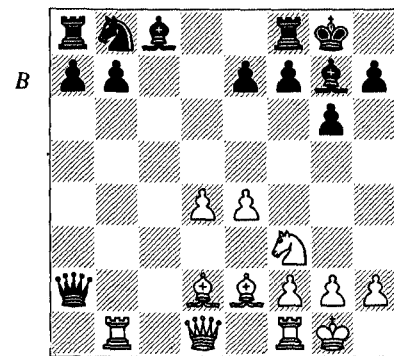
9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖a5+ 11 ♗d2

For 11 ♖d2 see Game 20.

11...♗xa2!

Yum, yum. The black queen can rightly be proud of this sweet little harvest for now there are two connected passed pawns on the queenside, aspiring one day to go on similarly extravagant excursions.

12 0-0 (D)



Many Grünfeld players have spent hours trying to fathom the mysteries of this position and no one yet seems

to know who is better here. To the uninitiated it seems somewhat astonishing that Black has won this vital pawn, has two glorious passers and now has the move to boot. Indeed, GM Jon Speelman once remarked that although he knew that this was a major battlefield among top GMs, he was rather perplexed as to why Black would ever be considered to be in danger. He had no particular theory in mind but just found it rather incredible that White could muster enough counterplay to justify losing such a pawn, never mind put Black in danger. I think this would probably be the feeling of many strong players who are unfamiliar with this line, so let's try to be as clear as possible as to what would attract white players to this position:

1) White has a large lead in development.

Former world champion Capablanca wrote that "If as a result of the capture [of material offered in the opening] full development will be retarded more than two moves, then it is doubtful whether the capture should be made." Significantly, he then adds: "It might be risked with the white pieces but never with the black pieces, except on very rare occasions." Finally he says: "No definite rule can be given on such matters". I would say that Black's development is retarded by about 1.7 moves or thereabouts (chess is not an exact science!). At any rate I don't think it's more than two moves and I'm sure that if Capablanca saw this position for the first time he would

have confidence in Black's chances. It may look like White has a huge lead in time, but both bishops are quite passive and to do any damage they will have to move again. Moreover, it is Black's move, and this presents a chance to catch up in development.

2) Black has difficulty catching up in development(!)

The light-squared bishop cannot be moved without leaving b7 *en prise* and the knight cannot rest on c6 for White will certainly play d5 and pertinently ask where it is going next.

3) Black cannot push the a- or b-pawn very far without creating significant weaknesses on the queenside.

It takes a long time for these pawns to influence events and since White has good control of the game there is a significant danger of Black creating major holes in his position as the pawns try to advance. For example after ...a5, b5 and b6 can be important outposts for the white pieces.

4) Black's kingside is poorly defended.

Since exchanging the king's knight at move five, Black has had no time to bring reinforcements to the aid of his king. A clobbering checkmate on h7 is unlikely but f7 and e7 are both sensitive spots offering a close-range shot at the king and these squares are often targeted by the white bishops.

5) Black's queen is cut off from the rest of her forces.

It now seems a little ironic that I refer to White's queen in Chapter 12 as "The Eager Lady" since clearly there are few better examples of eagerness

than Black's queen on a2! If Black is not very careful, the queen can quickly be in danger of being trapped, but more commonly the absence of support from other pieces can give White the irritating option of a perpetual attack on the black queen.

6) White's potential passed d-pawn is closer to the queening square than either of Black's passed pawns.

Delroy is once again a key player in White's strategy and since many variations involve Black exchanging the e7-pawn for the e4-pawn, he can quickly become of decisive importance, whereas the a- and b-pawns are more likely to be residually important in that their presence is felt more intensely as pieces are exchanged.

7) White's central control offers prospects for play on all sectors of the board, whereas Black will have difficulty creating any substantial threats for a number of moves.

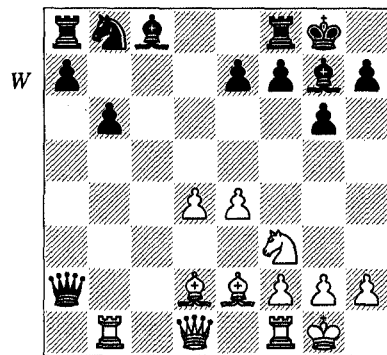
White's lead in time grants an early initiative and yet Black has no way of knowing where White will want to strike, because Black's lack of mobilization makes him somewhat vulnerable all over.

Sounds pretty bad? Well, if it were White's move I suspect that it would be extremely serious for Black, but just before White settles down to an 'à la carte' approach from the 'seven-point plan' mentioned above, Black has a chance to consolidate the material gain or reassert the combative spirit which brought him to the position we are now considering:

12...♙g4!

"This is clearly the best way to play against the ♖b1 line" according to GM Peter Wells, who has a fantastic score on the white side of this line and is an unlikely character to have ulterior motives in making such a statement! Black has many alternatives at this point and considering them may help to bring this important move into perspective.

a) 12...b6! (D) is a very grounded approach.

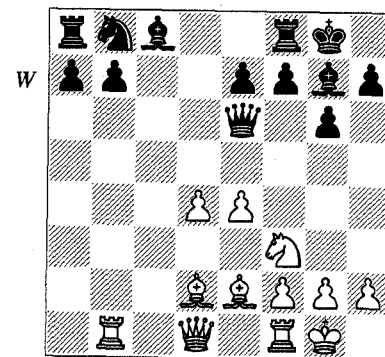


Black wants to develop the c8-bishop without losing one of his treasured pawn duo. However, I can't help but feel that it's asking a little bit much of the black position and is too slow to divert White from pushing his initiative into more concrete form. The most recent high-level clash, Ivanchuk-Svidler, Linares 1998 seemed to concur with this view: 13 ♖c1 ♙b7 14 ♙c4 ♖a4 15 ♙b5 ♖a2 16 ♙c4 ♖a4 17 ♙b5 ♖a2 18 ♖e1! (the other reason I don't like ...b6 is that it allows a three-fold repetition, but Ivanchuk is also about to demonstrate that White

has no need of this) 18...♖c8 19 ♖d1 e6 20 h4! (note that White's pressure is revealed very gradually; the danger in some lines with ...♖xa2 is that Black's lack of central control often simply means that he doesn't have an active plan) 20...h5 (although it is not immediately obvious, this is a major positional concession for now Black cannot move any kingside pawns without creating major weaknesses) 21 ♖e2 ♘c6 22 ♙c4 ♖a4 23 ♖a1 ♖c2 24 ♙d3 (White has used the stranded black queen to reorganize his position and now sets about creating concrete threats) 24...♖b2 25 ♖a4! (threatening to trap the queen with ♖b1) 25...b5 26 ♙xb5 ♖d8 27 ♙g5 ♖xe2 28 ♙xe2 ♖d7 29 ♖b1!. Ivanchuk has cleverly managed to manipulate the tactics and win his material back without losing control. His superior pawn-structure, extra space and active pieces give him a clear plus and Svidler was forced to resign thirty moves later.

b) 12...♖e6! (D) loses even more time with the queen, who may have sobered up and realized that her eagerness was out of place.

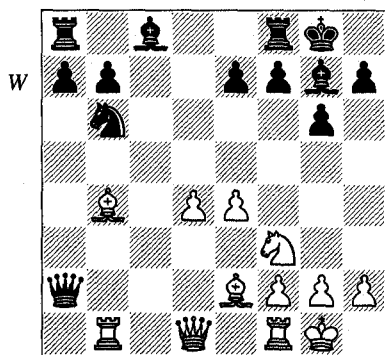
As we've just seen, it is not enough simply to mobilize and defend against the immediate threats, for White has enough trumps to maintain the initiative over a long period. 13 ♖c2 ♖c6 14 ♖d3 ♖d6 15 ♙b4 ♖d8 16 d5! ♘a6 17 ♙a3 b6 18 ♖e3 ♘c5 19 ♖fd1 ♙g4 20 e5 ♖c8 21 h3 ♙xf3 22 ♙xf3, as in Gelfand-Kamsky, Tilburg 1990, is comfortably better for White and is another example showing that domination in the centre tends to be more



important than an extra queenside pawn.

c) 12...♘d7! looks rather awkward in that it blocks the c8-bishop and does nothing to undermine White's centre. However, it is heading for an excellent square on b6 which will prevent the annoying recurrence of ♙c4 hitting the black queen and it will allow Black to develop his c8-bishop without ceding a pawn or weakening the queenside. At present this move is looking rather respectable theoretically. Although I don't feel as comfortable with it as I do with the main recommendation, I am aware that some of the lines with 12...♙g4 are genuinely 'drawish' and so I will now give a synopsis of the important lines, allowing you at least some choice against what is after all considered the critical test of the Grünfeld. 13 ♙b4 is invariably played, so as to apply immediate pressure while Black is taking so much time to mobilize. Fortunately for Black, 13...♘b6 (D) is still possible:

c1) 14 ♖a1 ♖e6 15 ♖b1 (15 ♖c2!?) 15...♙d7 16 ♖a5 looks rather like



White is turning the screw but although it is hard to deny that White has some pressure, it is far from clear if it is more important than Black's extra pawn, which shows little sign of leaving the black position. 16...♘c8! now looks like the best move since the c-file is of little use to Black at present and, having fulfilled its role in allowing Black to complete development without dropping the queenside, it falls back to give the black queen an escape-square on b6, contemplates coming to d6 and frees the black b-pawn, which may be needed as a defusing decoy if things get a little hot. Now:

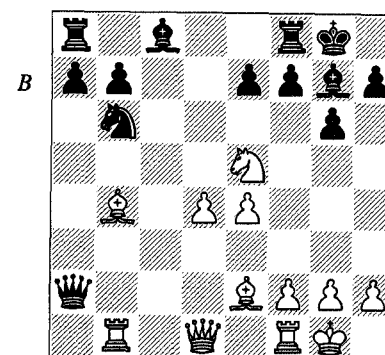
c1) 17 ♘e5 ♙e8! 18 ♙a3 b5! 19 ♙xb5 ♙xe5 20 ♙xe8 ♙xd4 (another idea is 20...♙c7!?) 21 ♙b7 ♘b6 22 ♙b5 is given as equal by GM Khalifman.

c2) 17 d5 ♙b6 18 e5 (it looks like a great day out for the white pieces but Black's position is very resilient, and he still has an extra pawn) 18...a6! (a rather cheeky way to get the coordination going; now that the queenside is completely secure and Black is one

move from being effectively mobilized it is becoming clear that while the white position looks imposing, Black's position is not easy to crack) 19 ♙e4! ♘a7! (note that e7 cannot be taken due to the 'restricting rook' on a5 being *en prise*) 20 ♙fa1 (20 ♙aa1!? ♘b5 21 ♙h4 ♙fc8!? looks unclear) 20...♙ac8! (White was threatening ♙xe7 and ♙c5, but, having carefully defended up to now, Black correctly decides that it is time to seek some activity and so seizes the c-file and allows White to take the e-pawn so that the other rook may also be active; 20...♙fe8 21 ♙c5 ♙d8 22 ♙e3 ♘b5 23 ♙b6 ♙b8 24 h4! with complete control for White, was the alternative; if you do choose to play 12...♘d7 it is important to have a good sense of when defending stops and counter-attacking begins) 21 ♙xe7 ♙fe8 22 ♙g5 ♙f5 23 ♙f4 and now in Zimmerman-Behl, Budapest 1996 Black played 23...♙c2 with an equal but complex position according to Behl.

c2) 14 ♙d3!? ♙e6!? 15 ♙a1 (15 d5? ♘xd5 16 exd5 ♙f5 is a neat trick which White should avoid; 15 ♘d2 ♙fd8 16 d5 ♙xd5! 17 exd5 ♘xd5!, leaving White with no defence to ...♘b4 or ...♘f4, is also one to remember) 15...♙c4!? (15...♙b3 is also possible) 16 ♙xe7 ♙xd3 17 ♙xd3 ♙fe8 18 ♙c5 ♙c4 19 ♙xc4 ♘xc4 20 ♙fc1 b6! 21 ♙xc4 bxc5 22 ♙xc5 ♙xe4 with equality is a line given by GM Gavrilkov, and looks reasonable to me.

c3) 14 ♘e5 (D) is thought to be critical. Now Black has two possibilities:



c31) It seems as though 14...f6 may equalize here but that also leads to drawish endgames.

c32) 14...♘d7!? is a relatively unexplored move, and a way of maintaining the tension. The only games I have seen with this move so far have continued 15 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 16 ♙b5 ♙fd8 17 ♙xe7 ♙e8 18 ♙c5 ♘xc5 19 ♙xe8 ♘xe4, when Black has won a second pawn for the exchange and has a good game.

Please consider that these lines are by no means an exhaustive treatment of 12...♘d7. It is offered as a tense alternative to 12...♙g4, which your author considers to be a more reliable, if not better, move. If you are a card-carrying pawn-grabber who likes to cling to material then I recommend it as there is no obvious line which gives White the advantage or in which a draw is immediately forced, but if you are pleased to equalize with Black and prefer positions which are not fraught with danger while giving White plenty of chance to go wrong then I strongly advise you stick with 12...♙g4.

If you've been reading GM Jim Plaskett's *Playing to Win* every day for the last decade then it's worth taking a closer look at 9...b6!? for it is an occupational hazard of playing megasharply as Black that White can sometimes steer the game towards drawish pastures.

d) 12...♙d7!? is another suspicious-looking move which does little to challenge the centre. The main idea is to have ...♙a4 as a useful resource in some lines and ...♙c6 is often important after ♙xb7. I suspect, however, that 13 ♙xb7 ♙c8 14 ♙f4! intending ♘e5 will put this idea out of business.

e) 12...♘a6?!. I can see little or no merit in this idea; in fact I doubt if there is an idea. Indeed, I have reason to believe that the player responsible for bringing this move to public attention, Turkey's GM Suat Atalik, only played the move as some sort of reward to a friend who gave him a D85 disk as a gift, since this disk showed that 12...♘a6 was the only non-losing move which had not played in this position! I admire Atalik's courage and creativity in playing such a shocking move against world-class Grandmaster Lembit Oll (Szeged 1997) and in case I sound unduly scathing I should back up my words with moves: 13 ♙c1 ♙e6 14 ♙e1 ♙d6 is given in Atalik's notes in *Informator 71* but now 15 ♙f4 ♙d8 16 ♙xa6 bxa6 17 d5 (with the idea of ♙c6) is a fairly forced sequence which looks very unpleasant for Black.

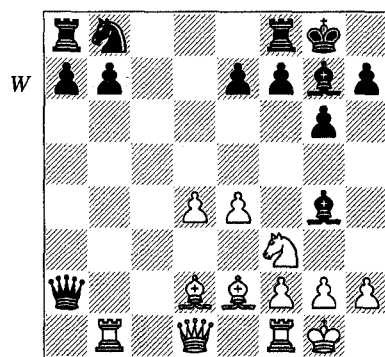
All of the above approaches have afforded White good chances for an

opening advantage and it took Black a long time to realize that clinging on to the extra pawn was not the key to success.

f) 12...a5!? is a different approach entirely and much more combative in nature than those we have just considered. This move seems to acknowledge that it is difficult for Black to develop actively and also that merely completing development does not always fully offset White's central control. The idea of the move seems to be that Black's best plan is to push the a-pawn as far as it will go as quickly as possible so as to divert White's attention from the centre. The key thread of the variations is seen when White tries to trap the black queen as in other lines but the proximity of the a-pawn to the queening square often allows a queen sacrifice to help force the pawn through. This approach has yet to be conclusively refuted despite appearing at the highest level. I have played it myself with some success but am now highly suspicious due to the number of exceedingly threatening lines and one variation in particular which I suspect will be ultimately unanswerable for Black.

Returning to the position after 12...g4 (D):

So perhaps now we can appreciate the attraction of 12...g4. It is the only reliable move in the position which both catches up in development and quickly applies pressure to the white centre. In this respect it is very much in the counter-attacking spirit of the opening. Rather than taking



material and defending, Black tries to trade off his gain in material for the loss of time incurred in gaining it, and hopes that the resulting positions will still be rich in complexity and sufficiently unclear so as to give White plenty of chances to go wrong.

13 g5!?

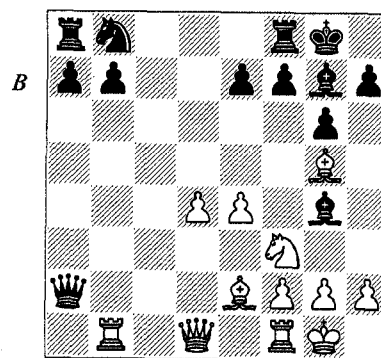
This is one of the two main tries for White here, the other being 13 e3, which we will examine in the next game. It is at least a little bizarre that this move doesn't actually immediately threaten gxe7 due to ...e8 and ...xe4, and yet it is still considered very dangerous for Black. It is even more bizarre that despite the bishop on g5 being a bit of a charlatan, Black's best reply appears to be 13...h6, encouraging it to go to a more 'honest' square. Therefore, it seems that the best way to overcome this confusion is to view 13 g5 as White's most active way of defending d4 and ...h6 as a way of forcing the bishop to a less desirable square before something funny happens and the capture on e7 does actually become a serious threat.

Two lesser moves:

a) 13 fxb7 xf3 14 xf3 xd4 15 e5 (15 b4 c6! is an important move suggested by Lalić: 16 e5 dxb4 17 fxb4 xe5 18 xa8 xa8 leaves Black with the lion's share of the winning chances) 15...a6 16 fb5 ad8 17 a5 e6 18 e2 c5 was much better for Black in Sandström-Khenkin, Stockholm 1990.

b) 13 d5 d7! feels good for Black since all his pieces are effectively mobilized and the a-pawn is raring to go. 14 fxb7 f8 15 b1 xb1 16 fxb1 fxb7 17 fxb7 c5 18 xe7 f8 was at least equal for Black in S.Ivanov-Lukin, St Petersburg 1992.

Returning to the position after 13 g5 (D):



13...h6!?

On g5 the bishop has influence on the h4-d8 and h6-c1 diagonals and since xe7 does not appear to be a threat it is a good idea to force the bishop to commit itself to a square where it will have less scope. Since 14 f4 would leave it vulnerable to a

later ...g5 or ...e5 and will allow the black knight to sit more comfortably on e5 (no imminent f4) it is likely that the bishop will go to e3 as in this game, or h4 as in Game 24. In both cases the bishop has influence on only one of the two above-mentioned diagonals and so the inclusion of ...h6 can be considered useful for Black.

That said, there is scope for alternatives here and I would like to draw your attention to 13...e6!? in particular (which I am not recommending here but will help us to make sense of my recommendation against 13...h6 14 h4). Now:

a) 14 d5! is very much the critical test and although Black has some tactical resources to hold the position together, it really does seem that he is teetering on the brink. 14...e4 15 fxb7 (15 d2 is also possible, and now GM Sakaev gives 15...a5 16 fxb7 f6 17 e3, when White undoubtedly has compensation for the material and Black's position is by no means harmonious) 15...e6 16 fb5 f5 17 d2 e5 18 c4 c7 19 d6 exd6 20 dxd6 is a line given by Azmaiparashvili in his notes to the game Garcia Ilundain-Azmaiparashvili, Pamplona 1996/7. Black's position resembles a minefield here and it looks like it's not difficult for White at least to bail out by winning the a-pawn at some point.

b) 14 h3!? is slightly more modest but after 14...xf3 15 xf3 the position is not without dangers for Black since it will not be easy for him to complete his development and White

still has two bishops and an imposing centre which is difficult to attack. I suspect Black is fully OK here but we will discuss this sort of position in more detail in Game 24.

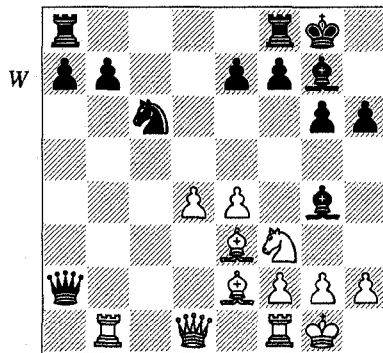
14 ♖e3

White hopes that provoking ...h6 will be useful for tying down the g7-bishop to the defence of the h6-pawn. Also, it is not so unusual for White's bishop to find itself on the a2-g8 diagonal in this line (often after d5-d6) and so it can be annoying for Black that White can sometimes attack the g6-pawn which would then be *en prise* since it is no longer defended from h7 and the f7-pawn is pinned to the king. The reason that the inclusion of these moves is not so obviously a good idea is that there are actually some lines where White later wants to put the bishop back on g5 with a 'genuine' attack on e7, and sometimes after White plays d5, ...g5 can be a useful way for Black to attempt to control some dark squares. I honestly don't know if it is better for White to provoke ...h6 and I think it will be some time before it is obvious to anyone.

14 ♖xe7 ♜e8 15 ♝xb7 and now 15...♟c6, as in Kramnik-Kasparov, Novgorod 1996, is fully adequate, but 15...♟d7!? is my recommendation – I always like to keep my pieces protecting each other as far as possible and I don't see any obvious improvement for White on 16 ♖b4 ♜xe4 17 ♜e1 ♖xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♜xd4, which was better for Black in Hultin-Ernst, Gausdal 1991.

14...♟c6 (D)

Rather than 14...b6?!. Just as with 13 ♖e3, it seems that it is incongruent for Black to play ...♟g4 with the intention of giving up his light-squared bishop and then weaken the queenside light squares in this manner. It is also rather greedy since Black is still seriously lagging in development.



Now that Black has actively deployed all his pieces and has his king in safety it is possible to say that the opening phase has been completed and Black, having pressure on the centre and still being a pawn up, has conducted the opening successfully. Indeed, if you are a bit of a 'theoryphobe' this is quite a reasonable approach to take, and if you feel you have understood the material so far you can be satisfied that you've learned how to play the opening and consider the following lines as being full of instructive middlegame themes which will help you understand how to play this type of position.

For 'theoryphiles' the situation is quite different for in a sense the theory

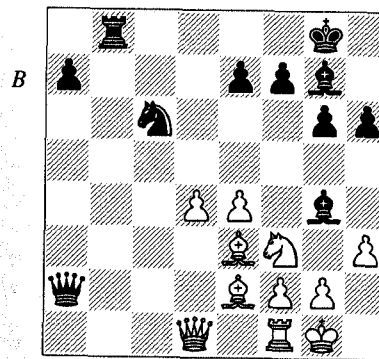
of this particular line is just beginning. There is some difficulty in grasping what follows because in almost all lines there will be a sister variation (see next game) with the black h-pawn one square back. I'll try to keep you on the right track theoretically while striving to make sense of what follows in a conceptual way.

15 d5

Or:

a) 15 h3 is far too tame: 15...♖xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♖xd4! is a powerful response since 17 ♖xd4 ♜fd8 18 ♖a1 ♜c4 19 ♜a4 ♟b4 seems to hold the extra material.

b) 15 ♜xb7 ♜ab8!? (it seems best to use a rook to challenge the b7-rook and it doesn't matter which; if Black puts a rook on d8 instead then both sides will have an active rook; White's on b7 and Black's on d8, but by forcing this exchange Black's remaining rook will be much more active than the white rook on f1) 16 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 17 h3 (D) and now:



b1) 17...♖xf3 18 ♖xf3 and then:

b11) 18...e6 19 e5!? is given as slightly better for White by Sakaev. At first I didn't believe this since there seems to be very little wrong with the black position and d4 looks every bit as weak as a7. Yet it is well worth making the effort to try to understand why White is better here; the following continuation may help: 19...♟e7 (Black's biggest problem is the immediate threat to this knight, which definitely needs to find a secure post where it won't be easily harassed; d5 is the obvious spot, but it seems that Black does not have enough time to get there and keep the queens on the board) 20 ♜a1! (exchanging queens makes it easier to mobilize the white rook and attack the a7-pawn) 20...♜b2 21 ♜xa2 ♜xa2 22 g4! (preventing ...♟f5, which would otherwise stabilize the position). Now White intends to bring the rook round behind the black position and has an enduring endgame advantage primarily due to the lack of anchorage for the black knight and White's two bishops. This is only a sample line of course but I was intrigued by GM Sakaev's assessment since I allowed something very similar against GM Peter Wells, as we'll see in the next game, and I did not suspect that I would really be worse in such positions.

b12) 18...♜d8 19 d5 ♟e5 20 ♜c1! (gaining a vital tempo on h6; this prevents Black from exercising ...♟c4!, which would be enough to equalize as we shall see in the following game) 20...♟h7 21 ♜c7 ♜d7 22 ♜c8 ♜c4 23 ♜e8! was clearly better for White in

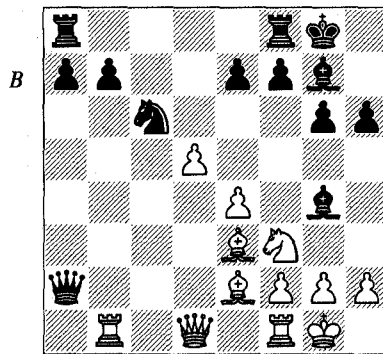
the game Gelfand-Kamsky, Dos Hermanas 1995. Note that Gelfand did not fear the 'threat' of ...♘xf3 since Black's e5-knight is, at least temporarily, more important to the position than the bishop on f3 and Black is not well enough coordinated to generate serious kingside threats.

b2) 17...♗d7!. When the pawn is on h6, Black does best to retreat to d7 but when the pawn is on h7 it is better to take on f3. This is connected to White's idea of playing ♖c1, which hits the h6-pawn and threatens to infiltrate on the c-file or possibly take an unprotected knight on c6. However, this explanation only fully makes sense when you have seen the variations. 18 d5 (18 ♗d3 ♘b4 19 ♖b1 a5 was fully equal in San Segundo-Azmaiparashvili, Madrid 1996) 18...♘e5 19 ♗f4 ♖b2 20 ♖c1 g5! shows one positive side of having played ...h6 and was good enough to equalize completely in Gelfand-J.Polgar, Novgorod 1996. Note that without this move Black would be clearly worse due primarily to the weakness of the a7- and e7-pawns.

Returning to the position after 15 d5 (D):

15...♘e5!?

This is probably the best move in the given position and it's good to know that Kasparov seems to think so too. The variations suggest that this is connected to the pawn being on h6 so that after a later ...e6 is met by d6, White will not have a deadly follow up with ♗g5-e7. Moreover, if Black tries to put his knight on the wing there is a



relatively forcing sequence which leaves the h6-pawn *en prise* at the end. Other moves:

a) 15...♘a5?! is now considered inaccurate, primarily due to 16 ♗c5 ♗f6 (16...♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 ♖fe8 was shown to be too passive after 18 ♖e1 b6 19 ♖e2 ♖c4 20 ♖c2 ♖a4 21 ♗e7! in Scherbakov-Vorontsov, Kurgan 1995) 17 e5! ♗xe5 18 ♖b4 ♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♖ae8 20 ♗e3 ♘c4 21 ♗xh6 ♘d6 22 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 (22...♗xf8!?) 23 h4!, when Black's weakened kingside meant that his compensation for the exchange was not fully adequate in Kramnik-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996.

Note however, that this game was very important theoretically because Black's idea was holding up in numerous games prior to this one. It does not take a genius to realize that in this case Black benefits considerably from having not played ...h6 since without the weakened kingside White would have no good plan.

b) 15...♗xf3!?. I don't fully understand why this move hasn't been played more often, since as we'll see

in the next game, it is thought to be more accurate than ...♘e5 when the pawn is on h7 and yet I think that the reasons for this have been somewhat confused over time.

b1) Presumably, 16 gxf3 ♘a5 is unproblematic.

b2) 16 ♗xf3 ♘e5 and then:

b21) 17 ♗c5 ♗f6 18 ♖xb7 ♖fb8 19 ♗xe7 ♖xb7 20 ♗xf6 ♖e8 would be analogous to Krasenkov-Azmaiparashvili, Erevan OL 1996. There now seems to be no way to exploit the presence of the pawn on h6, e.g. 21 ♖c1 ♖b2! (or 21...♗h7); 21 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 22 ♖c1 but then 22...♗g7 keeps everything covered.

b22) 17 ♗e2 ♘c4! and now White would like to be able to play 18 ♗g5 but is well-advised not to.

b23) After 17 ♖xb7, 17...e6?! would be a mistake because of the powerful 18 ♖e2! but 17...a5!?, analogous to Bacrot-Illescas, looks every bit as convincing with the pawn on h6.

16 ♖xb7

There appears to be no good alternative.

16 ♖e1!? has not been tried but I suspect it makes less sense when Black hasn't played ...e6; 16...♗xf3 17 gxf3 ♘c4! appears a reasonable response.

16...e6!

Even in such sharp lines, the basic principle of undermining the white centre still applies.

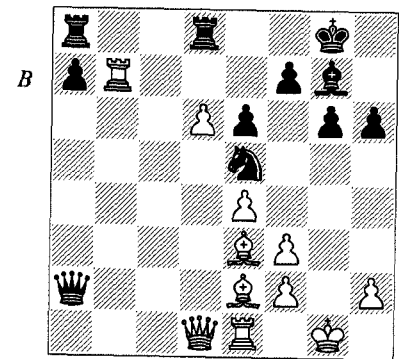
17 ♖e1!?

Although we soon transpose, 17 d6 ♖fd8 18 ♖e1 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 is a more common move-order.

17...♗xf3 18 gxf3 ♖fd8

Perhaps Kramnik's move-order was designed to tease Kasparov with the possibility of 19 f4!?, as suggested by Azmaiparashvili. However, it looks to me like Black has little to fear after 19...♘c4.

19 d6 (D)



19...♖a5!!

This was the dextrous move which brought the 12...♗g4 line back to life. It immediately led to a draw in Lautier-Illescas, Wijk aan Zee 1997 after 20 ♗d2 ♖a2 21 ♗e3 ♖a5 22 ♗d2 ♖a2 23 ♗e3.

Obviously White was impressed by Black's idea and wisely decided not to engage in battle without the theoretical ammunition which Black obviously had on his side. The point of this baffling retreat is simply to highlight the fact that White's queen is somewhat over-loaded and so prevent White from playing the move he obviously wants to play. So, 20 f4 ♖xd6! is, of course, the crucial point.

Those unfamiliar with the line may then wonder why Black doesn't play

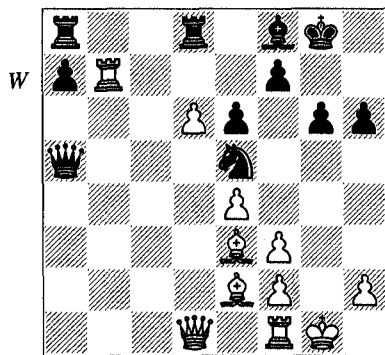
19...♖a3 with the same idea and the reason was seen in Gelfand-Kamsky, Dos Hermanas 1996: 20 f4 ♖xd6 21 ♖c1!! ♗xc1 22 ♖xc1 ♘c6 23 e5 ♘d4 24 ♖cc7!! ♘xe2+ 25 ♖f1 ♖dd8 26 ♖xf7 ♙h8 27 ♖xe2, when White went on to win the endgame. Note that Gelfand has more experience in this line of the Grünfeld than anyone and yet recently preferred 14 ♙h4!?, as we'll see in Game 24.

This suggests to me that he respected Illescas's idea, and this is good news for Black.

20 ♖f1!

This is White's latest try for an advantage but it seems that Black is holding fort. The following notes are based around Kasparov's in *Informator* 72.

20...♙f8! (D)



It is absolutely crucial that White is not given time to play f4.

21 d7!

The line 21 ♖b5? ♗a2 22 ♖xe5? ♙xd6 23 ♖b5 ♙xh2+ 24 ♖xh2 ♖xd1 25 ♙xd1 ♖c4! is vintage Kasparov,

and a beautiful demonstration of the rewards of having an active queen.

21...♗a2!

Now if White plays f4, Black simply captures with the knight on d7 and if White is insistent he will have to drop the bishop on e2.

22 ♖e1 ♗a5!

The d-pawn is one square further on, but the same principle applies.

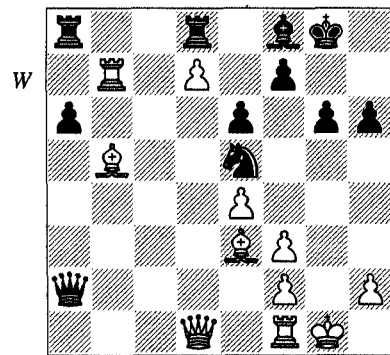
23 ♖f1

23 ♖f1 ♘xf3 24 ♙xf3 ♗a6+ 25 ♖g1 ♖xb7 26 e5 ♖c7 27 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 is a long line given as unclear by Kasparov. Delroy is by no means a timid character but Black is a pawn up and has the safer king.

23...♗a2!

I'm sure you are tired of the exclams, but I trust the point is now clear.

24 ♙b5 a6 (D)



25 ♙d4

Or:

a) 25 f4 axb5 26 fxe5 ♗a6 27 ♖c7 b4 is another unclear line. In such positions Jon Speelman's quotation from Chapter 3 is particularly pertinent. I

would rather be Black here for I feel that as long as sufficient caution is exercised so as not to allow Delroy to touch down, White's position, particularly because of his draughty king, is much more difficult to play.

b) 25 ♙a4 ♘xf3+ and now:

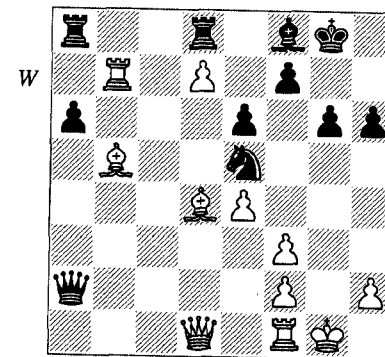
b1) 26 ♖g2 was recently tried by Swiss theoretician Yannick Pelletier as White against Grünfeld expert GM Igor Stohl, which made me wonder if Kasparov's analysis left something important unsaid.

b11) However, even Stohl seemed to get lost in Kasparov's jungle-like haze of variations and now played what seems to be the inferior 26...♘g5?!, and after 27 ♖c2! ♗a3 28 ♖d1 White was in control of the game.

b12) So we don't know what Pelletier had in mind within or after another of Kasparov's unclear lines, 26...♘h4+! (removing the king from the protection of the f1-rook so that ...♖c4 cannot be met by ♖c2) 27 ♖h1 ♖c4 28 f3 ♙e7 29 ♙b6 ♖f8. I guess it's fair to say that the chances of the reader reaching such a position are fairly slim, but for the sake of completeness I should also say that I don't see a problem with Kasparov's analysis and again in the final position I like the fact that Black has an extra pawn and that his king is safer.

b2) 26 ♖xf3 is also possible and appears rather drawish: 26...♖xa4 27 ♖d1 (27 e5 ♖ab8 28 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 29 ♖d1 ♖h4 30 ♙a7 ♖d8 31 ♙b6 ♖xd7 with equality) 27...♖c6 28 ♖b6 (28 ♙d4 ♙g7) 28...♖c7 29 e5 ♖xd7! again with equality.

In both these lines we see the significance of White's lack of a king shield, and in both cases this is the crucial factor which allows Black to draw.



25...♙g7

Because Delroy will seek coronation on a dark square it is better to get rid of White's dark-squared bishop. 25...axb5? 26 ♙xe5 ♖a7? 27 ♙c7 ♖xb7 28 ♙xd8 ♗a7 29 ♙b6 is winning for White. Kramnik now played...

26 ♙xe5 1/2-1/2

26 f4 axb5 27 fxe5 ♗a6 28 ♖c7 b4 obviously did not appeal to White and after the move played Black cannot organize himself sufficiently to get an attack going on the white king, e.g. 26...♙xe5 27 ♙c6 a5 28 ♖b5 ♖a6 29 ♖xe5 (29 ♖c1?! ♙d4) 29...♖xc6 30 ♖a1 is equal.

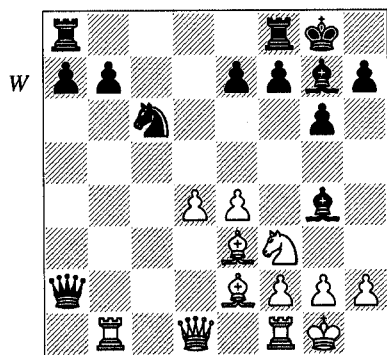
Game 23

Krasenkow - Leko

Madrid 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5
♘xd5 5 e4 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♘f3

c5 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 ♕e2 cxd4 10 cxd4
 ♗a5+ 11 ♔d2 ♗xa2 12 0-0 ♔g4 13
 ♕e3!? ♝c6 (D)



14 d5

14 ♖xb7 again has some sting, but in this case it doesn't make much difference where the h-pawn is. I still think it makes good sense to swap off White's active rook by 14...♗ab8 15 ♖xb8 (15 ♗c7 ♗fc8 16 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 is not likely to make much difference since the black rook normally slides to d8 in any case) 15...♖xb8 16 h3 ♕xf3! (this time the capture is well advised since after 16...♕d7 Black does not have the crucial ...g5 resource that we saw in note 'b2' to White's 15th move in Game 22; from White's point of view, facing this capture is less pleasant since there is no h6-pawn to help gain the tempo that allowed infiltration in Gelfand-Kamsky also given above) 17 ♕xf3 and here:

a) I tried to keep my rook on the open b-file by 17...e6 against GM Peter Wells, London 1998 but this is bad for two reasons. After 18 d5 (18

e5!, à la Sakaev, is a better try for White) 18...♕e5:

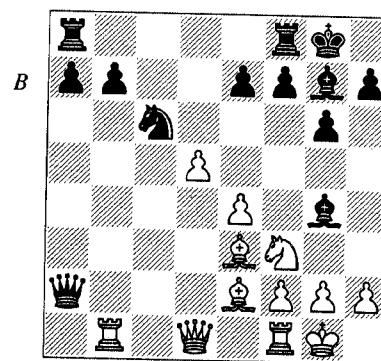
a1) Peter now played 19 ♕g5, which was probably too aggressive, since after 19...h6! 20 ♕e7 ♖b2! 21 d6 ♗d2 22 ♗b1 ♗a4! 23 ♗b8+ ♖h7 24 ♗c7 ♗d4! I had dealt with Delroy in an extremely active manner and only great ingenuity now kept White in the game.

a2) It's well worth being aware of the following line, which is an easy draw for Black when the pawn is on h2 but problematic when on h3: 19 dxe6 ♗xe6 20 ♕xa7 ♝xf3+ 21 ♗xf3 ♖e8 22 ♖e1 f5. White can now try 23 ♗e3 fxe4 24 f3, which at least causes some suffering. If you're willing to bend the rules a little and put the white h-pawn back on h2 we can now follow Chernin-Azmaiparashvili, Portorož Vidmar mem 1996: 24...♗c4! 25 fxe4 ♖e7 26 ♖h1 ♖f7 27 h3(!) ♖f1+ 28 ♖xf1 ♗xf1+ 29 ♗g1 ♗d3 30 ♗e1 ♕c3 31 ♗e3 ♗b1+ 32 ♗g1 1/2-1/2. This game began with 14 d5 ♕xf3 15 ♕xf3 ♕e5 16 ♖xb7 e6, so it may not seem very relevant, but such a variation is fairly thematic and may help you to understand otherwise confusing moves and comments.

b) 17...♗d8! (this looks highly reliable for Black) 18 d5 (the main point of ...♗d8 is to force this move) 18...♕e5 19 ♗c1!? (so far this has been the only move tried, but clearly it is less obviously the correct move without the pawn being on h6; 19 ♗e2!? is a plausible improvement but as long as Black does not make an unnecessary capture there should be no problem:

19...♗a3! looks best, protecting a7 and intending to bring a rook to b2 – I suspect that Black has nothing to fear here) 19...♕c4! 20 ♕g5 (20 ♕xa7?! ♗xa7 21 ♗xc4 ♕d4 22 ♗e2 ♖b8 is, if anything, slightly better for Black, who can attack f2 while White can only defend; 20 ♕f4 a5!? is also promising for Black) 20...♖e8 (20...♕f6?! would be bad here due to 21 ♕xf6 exf6 22 ♗c3 ♕e5 23 ♖a1 ♗c4 24 ♗xc4 ♕xc4 25 ♖xa7) 21 ♖e1 (21 ♕g4 ♗a4! 22 ♕h6 ♕xh6 23 ♗xh6 ♕e5 is comfortably equal) 21...e6! (it's a good time to hit the centre since 21...a5 22 ♖e2 ♗b3 23 ♖c2 allows White to establish control) 22 ♖e2 ♗b3 23 dxe6 ♖xe6 was now equal in Khalifman-Stohl, Bundesliga 1997.

Returning to the position after 14 d5 (D):



14...♕a5!?

Although this was bad in the last game, I think it is fully playable with the pawn on h7. I like the fact that White's central pawns have been forced to lose some flexibility and that

Black's last move protects the b7-pawn. Still, White has various dangerous approaches here so Black should tread carefully.

Other ideas:

a) 14...♕e5?! is now thought to be inaccurate due to 15 ♖xb7 e6 16 d6 ♗fd8 17 ♕g5!, which again shows why it matters so much where the black h-pawn resides. 17...♕xf3 18 gxf3 f6 (18...♖xd6? 19 ♗xd6 ♗xe2 20 ♖b8+ ♖xb8 21 ♗xb8+ ♕f8 22 ♗xe5) 19 ♕e3 was clearly better for White in San Segundo-de la Villa, Mondariz 1997.

b) 14...♖fd8!? is also possible, but very risky. 15 ♖xb7 e6 16 ♖c7 ♕xf3 17 gxf3 ♕b4 18 ♕g5 exd5 19 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 gave Black excellent compensation in Sakaev-Tseshkovsky, Yugoslavia 1997 but I think there is plenty of scope to improve White's play.

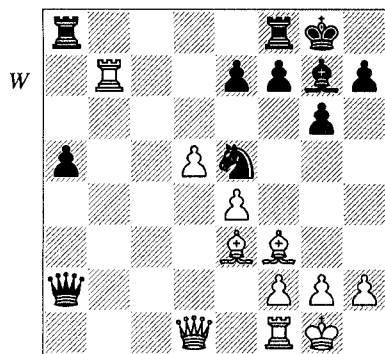
c) 14...♕xf3!? (the main approach of top GMs recently but to my mind it seems less combative than 14...♕a5) 15 ♕xf3 ♕e5 and then:

c1) 16 ♖xb7 and now:

c11) Note that 16...e6 17 ♗e2! is very good for White since Black neither wants to enter the endgame nor to give up his excellent knight for the muffled bishop on f3, while if the queen leaves the a2-g8 diagonal White will probably capture on e6 and then play ♕g4.

c12) 16...a5!! (D) is another of Illescas's crucial novelties and it was enough to equalize against Bacrot in Pamplona 1997/8.

After 17 ♖xe7 a4! GM Illescas uses the 'compensation for the material'

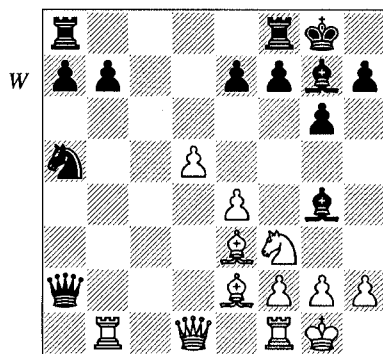


symbol in his *Informator* annotations but I would certainly say that Black's position is easier to play. Following 18 ♙d4 (it is important to fight for this diagonal since otherwise the a-pawn and g7-bishop have an excellent partnership to deliver the pawn all the way to a1) Black now played 18... ♜xf3+ , which was presumably part of his preparation since the game now seemed to head inexorably towards a draw after 19 gxf3 ♙xd4 20 ♚xd4 a3 21 ♗g2 ♚b2 ! 22 ♚xb2 axb2 23 ♞b1 ♞fb8 24 d6 ♗f8 25 ♞c7 ♞a1 26 ♞xb2 ♞xb2 27 ♞c8+ ♗g7 28 d7 ♞d2 29 d8 ♚ ♞xd8 30 ♞xd8 with a drawn rook endgame. However, 18... ♞fe8 ! would have been a perfectly reasonable way to play for a win since White seems to be obliged to try 19 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 20 ♚a1 (20 ♙e2 ?! ♞c8 ! 21 f4? ♞c2 !) 20... ♚c4 ! with a very tense position and chances for both sides.

c2) 16 ♙e2 ! seems to be a good move here but only because 16... ♜c4 allows 17 ♙g5 ! ♜d6 (17... ♞fe8 is too passive: 18 ♞xb7 ♜d6 19 ♞b4 ! a5 20 ♞a4 ♚b2 21 ♙c1 !, as recommended

by GM Khuzman, is a good example of what to avoid as Black, for White has complete control of the game) 18 ♙xe7 ! ♜xe4 19 ♙f3 ♜d2 20 ♚e2 ! ♞fe8 21 d6 ♜xf3+ 22 ♚xf3 ♙f8 23 ♞xb7 was significantly better for White in Kramnik-Topalov, Linares 1998.

Returning to the position after 14... ♜a5 (D):



15 ♙c5

This follows the recipe for the analogous position with the pawn on h6 but Black's resources seem fully adequate.

a) 15 ♞b4 ! aims to take the c4-square away from the black knight and to gain a tempo on the g4-bishop when playing e5. To my knowledge this has not been tried at the highest level. Presumably Black can take advantage of the fact that the bishop on g7 is not 'chained' to the h-pawn. 15... ♙c3 16 ♞a4 ♚b2 leads to a tense position, but it seems like Black has everything covered.

b) 15 ♙g5 ! takes advantage of the absence of the h6-pawn and was

recently played by Kramnik. 15... ♚a3 (the sober-looking 15... ♞fe8 is met by the annoying 16 ♙b5) 16 ♙d2 ♙c3 17 ♙c1 ♚d6 (attacking the rook with 17... ♚a2 ! may be an improvement; at any rate, Black's moves do not look particularly well-considered around about here) 18 e5 ♚d7 (18... ♚d8 ! severs the connection of the rooks but the queen is less vulnerable to e5-e6 tricks on d8 and protecting the knight on a5 would prevent White's following sequence since Black would then be threatening to win the e5-pawn) 19 ♙d2 ♙xf3 20 ♙xf3 ♙xd2 21 ♚xd2 ♜c4 22 ♚e2 b5 23 e6 ♚d6 24 exf7+ ♗g7 25 ♞xb5 ♜e5 26 ♙e4 ♞xf7 27 ♞a5 gave a little something to White in Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Monaco Amber rapid 1998. Clearly the time-limit influenced Ivanchuk's play and it seems that there is considerable scope for improvement in Black's play.

15... ♙f6

Defending the pawn and preparing to attack the c5-bishop.

16 e5

The only dangerous move.

16... ♙xe5 17 ♞b4 !

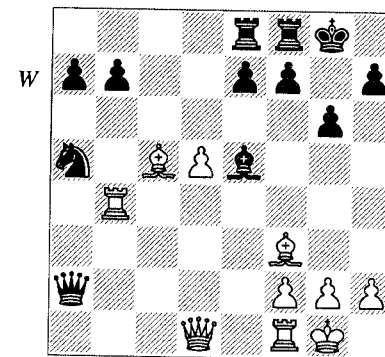
Obliging Black to exchange on f3 while preparing to threaten ♞a4 .

17 h3 is obviously less dangerous and although 17... ♞fd8 ! is now possible, there is nothing wrong with 17... ♙xf3 18 ♙xf3 ♞ae8 ! since after 19 d6 exd6 20 ♙d5 ♜c4 White would like to play 21 ♚g4 and have a double threat on c4 and g6 but since the pawn is on h7 and not h6, Black could simply take on c5 with a safe king and some extra pawns.

17... ♙xf3 18 ♙xf3 ♞ae8 ! (D)

An important move.

18... ♙f6 ? is shown to be careless by 19 ♞a4 ♚b3 20 ♞xa5 ♚xd1 21 ♞xd1 b6 22 d6!.



19 ♙xa7

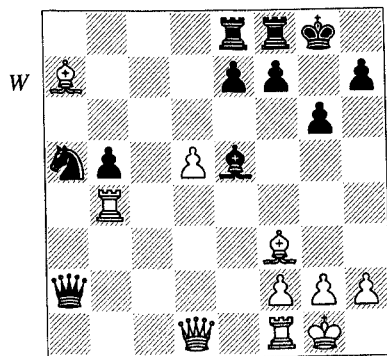
19 ♞a4 ?! ♚b3 20 ♙xa7 (20 ♞xa5 ♚xd1 21 ♞xd1 b6 is clearly better for Black, who will have the better of the opposite-colour bishops and a useful extra pawn) 20...b6 21 ♚xb3 ♜xb3 22 ♙xb6 ♜d2 also gives Black an excellent endgame since White's remaining pawns are very weak.

19 ♙e3 no longer makes sense since there is nothing on h6 to attack. Black could then play 19... ♜c4 20 ♙h6 ♜d6 21 ♙xf8 ♞xf8 and in this position I would even say that Black is winning since in the long term White has no answer to a gradual advance of the a- and b-pawns.

19...b5! (D)

Taking the a4-square from the rook; after this move White has to struggle to equalize.

20 ♞xb5

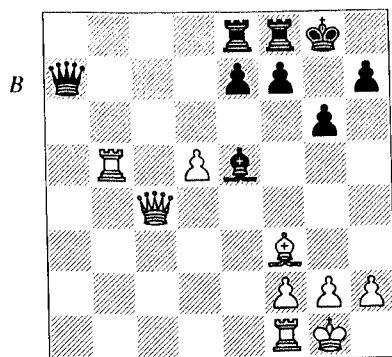


20 d4 xd4 21 xd4 $\text{b7!?$ is certainly no worse for Black, while 20 e2 xe2 21 xe2 c4 should be a draw, but of course Black could claim that d5 is a relevant weakness.

20... c4 21 $\text{e2!?$

This is a slight technical mistake. 21 c5 d2 would have made it easier for White to demonstrate complete equality.

21... xa7 22 xc4 (D)



22... c8

Black now has a slight edge on the basis of his bishop being more active

and the f2-square being a little sensitive.

Leko probes well, but Krasenkov defends calmly.

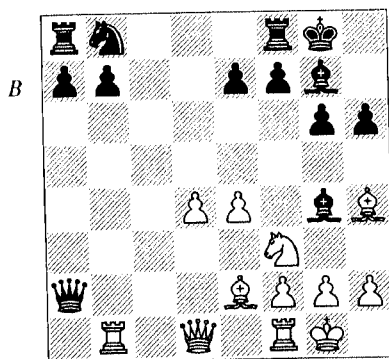
23 e2 d6 24 bb1 c3 25 g3 fc8 26 b2 d4 27 d2 f6 28 e4 h5 29 h4 8c4 30 d3 xd3 31 xd3 c3 32 d2 b4 33 e2 c5 34 g2 g7 35 d1 e5 36 f3 xe2 37 xe2 c2 38 f1 f6 39 d3 e5 40 f3 f5 41 b5 d4 42 e8 f6 43 d7 1/2-1/2

Game 24

Gelfand – Shirov

Polanica Zdroj Rubinstein mem 1998

1 d4 f6 2 f3 g6 3 c4 g7 4 c3 d5 5 cxd5 xd5 6 e4 xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 b1 0-0 9 e2 cxd4 10 cxd4 a5+ 11 d2 xa2 12 0-0 g4 13 g5 h6 14 $\text{h4!?$ (D)



In one way it seems strange to retain the bishop on this diagonal where it doesn't yet threaten to capture the e7-pawn and can be shunted away with ...g5 as soon as it does. Yet, at the time

of writing, this move appears to be the sternest test of Black's opening idea. We have seen in the other lines that e7 is often Black's Achilles Heel and so it makes sense for the bishop's eyes to be trained on this spot. Indeed, if we assume Black will have to play ...g5 then it is fair to say that this doesn't harmonize well with the bishop being on g4 since Black will not want to weaken the kingside light squares even more by exchanging his light-squared bishop and we will soon see that the bishop on g4 is also a tactical liability.

14...a5!?

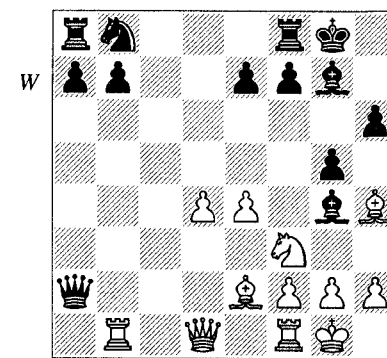
This has been the proposed solution by GMs Shirov and Sokolov but it doesn't feel right to me at all and the beautiful game we are about to see partially confirms this feeling. Considering that Black will soon be forced to play ...g5, I am uncomfortable with Black's kingside being so weak when there is little counterplay against the white centre. The lines with 12...a5 tend to work well only when Black can somehow support the a-pawn with the g7-bishop. Moreover, in these variations the black king is completely safe and the battle lies on the centre and on the queenside where Black is not numerically inferior, and where the black queen can make her presence felt. Since it now seems that Black has little chance of undermining White's centre it is unwise to engage in a kingside vs queenside battle because in such battles the side with greater central control tends to win.

Other moves:

a) 14... $\text{d8!?$ was GM Illescas's solution when confronted with 14 h4 by Anand in Madrid 1998. This move makes more sense to me than 14...a5 because Black is attacking the centre, but it would seem that the following sequence is almost forced: 15 d5 g5 16 g3 b6 17 e1! (threatening 18 xcg5!) 17... xf3 18 xf3 d7 19 e5 and while Black is not doing as badly as some commentators have claimed, he had clearly lost the opening battle.

I was intrigued to see Anand trying 14 h4 because when I first decided to play the ... xa2 and ... g4 line I was impressed by the following idea...

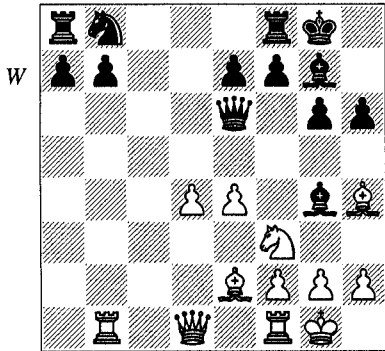
b) 14...g5! (D) makes some sense since Black can follow up by attacking the centre without worrying about the e7-pawn.



15 g3 c6 (the consistent move) 16 d5 ad8 (actively mobilizing all the forces, and preparing a central pawn-break) 17 xb7 $\text{f5!?$ (this was all suggested in the notes to the game Chernin-J.Horvath, Hungarian Ch 1992 where Black suffered after 17...e6

18 ♖c7!). I was completely satisfied with Black's prospects after 17...f5 until I saw the Anand game, which suggested that he had also seen these notes to Chernin-Horvath but had prepared some improvement. I suspect that his idea was 18 dxc6!? ♠xd1 19 ♖xd1!, which seems to put Black in a rather difficult situation since it is unlikely that Black can avoid the exchange of queenside pawns and then we will have a situation with pawns on one side (probably an extra one for White) where the number of pieces tends to be more important than the type of pieces and Black's queen will be reduced to a purely defensive role. A sample variation: 19...♞a6!? 20 exf5 ♞xc6 21 ♠xa7 ♖xf5 22 ♠xe7 with a slight but enduring advantage to White.

c) All things considered, I suggest that 14...♞e6!? (D) may be the most effective antidote to 14 ♖h4.



The inclusion of ...h6 and ♖h4 means that whenever the black queen takes on e4 it will be indirectly attacking the bishop on h4 through the threat

of ...♖xf3. This was the acute observation of GM Jon Speelman when we were discussing his analysis of Anand-Illescas in *The Observer*. This insight was stated rather casually, but it seems to be profoundly important theoretically and only makes good sense when you have acquainted yourself with the reasons for rejecting 13 ♖g5 ♞e6 as considered in Game 22.

c1) 15 d5 ♞xe4 is no longer a problem since after 16 ♠xb7 or 16 ♞d2 Black can safely take on f3 and h4 so White has to try a different approach.

c2) 15 ♠xb7 at the very least allows 15...♞xe4 16 ♠xe7 ♞d5 with a clear advantage to Black. The bishop on h4 is now badly misplaced since it is needed to defend White's d-pawn.

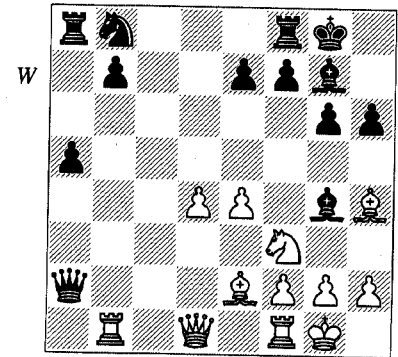
c3) 15 h3!? is a very reasonable try for White. This was played in Komljenović-D.Sanchez, San Sebastian 1993, a game cited by Lalić, who bases upon it a claim that Black is likely to remain a "solid pawn up". However, it feels to me that the position where Lalić stops is by no means 'solid' for Black. I am not saying this to gripe, but just to suggest that although this game eventually clarified in Black's favour, it seemed to me that the position was somewhat precarious for a number of moves, so it is well worth considering earlier improvements for Black. Play continued 15...♖xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♞d7 (this one is OK – it feels good to keep the queenside pawns intact; Black would generally like to meet d5 with ...♞d6 and ...♞d7 in an effort to establish a dark-square blockade but I don't see any convincing way

to avoid losing this tempo with the queen) 17 d5 and Black's next move, 17...♞a6!?, is definitely on trial, on the charge of not contributing to the restraint of White's centre. It deserves a fair hearing, however, because Black needs to complete his development before White generates serious threats, and the c5-square is by no means a useless post for the knight. However, I think Black may also consider a sequence of moves leading to the domination of the central dark squares even at the expense of the b-pawn, which is a luxury compared to the necessity of combating the white centre. ...♖e5, ...g5, ...♞d6 and ...♞d7 can all contribute to the cause, but one problem is that White can attack the knight on d7 with ♠xb7 and ♖g4 and so the blockade could look rather brittle if Black 17...♖e5!? is one way to do it, since after 18 ♖g4 ♞d6 19 ♠xb7 g5 20 ♖g3 ♖xg3 21 fxg3 a5 the position is unclear but it doesn't feel like Black should be worse, e.g. 22 ♞f3 ♞a6 23 ♖h5 f5!? 24 exf5 ♞c5 25 ♠b5 ♞d7!? or 22 ♞d4 ♞c6!.

Following 17...♞a6, Komljenović-D.Sanchez went on 18 ♞e2 ♞c5?! (allowing the following pawn advance seems somewhat criminal to my mind so I may have to sentence this one; 18...♖e5!? looks like a promising alternative: 19 ♖g4 ♞d6 20 ♠xb7 {20 f4!? ♖xf4 21 ♖xe7 ♖h2+ 22 ♞h1 ♞xe7 23 ♞xh2 ♞e5+} 20...g5 21 ♖g3 {21 ♠d7 ♞f6} 21...♖xg3 22 fxg3 ♞c5 looks very good for Black and I don't see any obvious improvement for

White here) 19 e5 e6! 20 ♠fd1 (20 ♞e3!?) 20...exd5 21 ♖xd5 (21 ♠xd5!?) 21...♞f5 22 ♖e7 (22 ♠b5!?) 22...♠fc8 23 ♞e3 ♞a4 24 e6 ♞c3 25 exf7+ ♞h7 26 ♖e6 ♞xd1 27 ♠xd1 ♞c2 28 ♠f1 ♠c7 and Black was in control.

Returning to the position after 14...a5 (D):



15 ♠xb7 g5 16 ♖g3 a4 17 h4 a3 18 hgx5 hgx5 19 ♠c7!

Up to now the players had been following Lautier-I.Sokolov, Malmö 1998, which was eventually a draw after 19 ♠b5.

This looks like a prepared novelty by Gelfand, and as so often happens after good preparation, you are inspired to honour your opening work with a fantastic game thereafter. Since this game needn't concern us too much theoretically I will keep the comments brief, but if I were ever to seek out a model white 'antidote' to the brilliance shown by Fischer in Game 1 then I think this would be a very likely candidate.

19...♞a6

This may be Black's big mistake since I suspect Shirov had missed White's stunning 23rd move. In saying that, I see no obvious improvement since 19...d7!? 20 c2 ♖b3 21 dxc5 ♙xe2 22 ♜xe2! simply wins a pawn. White keeps control in the end-game because Black's lack of central pressure means that he cannot force the a-pawn through. 19...♗b2!? might be playable, though.

20 ♜xe7 ♗b2

It seems logical to attack the centre while making way for the a-pawn but this allows a brilliant sequence which will be remembered for a long time to come.

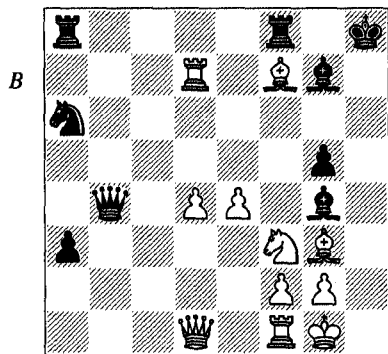
21 ♙c4!

Presumably Shirov though he had prevented this with his last move.

21...♗b4

The rook on e7 is trapped while the queen attacks two pieces.

22 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 23 ♙d7!! (D)



A stunning conception from Boris Gelfand; the g4-bishop is decoyed from its diagonal.

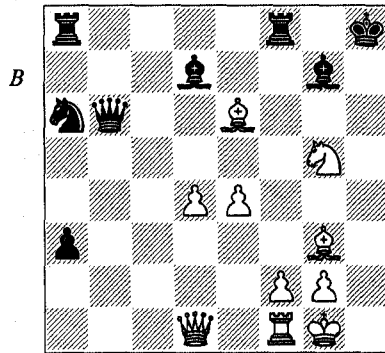
23...♙xd7 24 dxc5

White threatens mate in two.

24...♗b6

This seems to be the only move as 24...♙h6 25 ♙e5+ ♙g7 26 ♗h5# is checkmate.

25 ♙e6!! (D)



Another beauty: the bishop blocks the sixth rank and White again threatens ♗h5+.

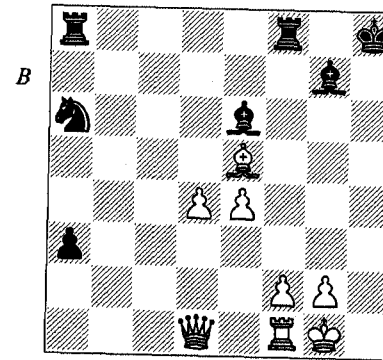
25...♗xe6

There is nothing better. Although Black will almost have material equality now, his lack of foot soldiers affords his pieces no anchorage and the white queen is not averse to relieving them of their suffering. The following analysis are the main lines taken from GM Luc Winants's commentary to this game in Chess Planet:

a) 25...♙xd4 26 ♗h5+ ♖g7 27 e5! closes the net with decisive effect.

b) 25...♙e8 26 ♗g4 and now both 26...♙f6 27 ♙e5 ♜xe6 28 d7+! and 26...♙xd4 27 ♗h4+ ♖g7 28 ♗h7+ ♖f6 29 e5+ ♙xe5 (29...♖xg5 30 ♗g7+ ♙g6 31 ♙h4+ ♖f4 32 ♗xg6 ♖xe5 33

♙g3+ ♙f4 34 ♙xf4+ ♖xf4 35 ♗f5#) 30 ♗f5+ ♖e7 31 ♗xe5 ♗c5 32 ♙d5+ ♖d7 33 dxe6 are completely decisive. 26 dxe6 ♙xe6 27 ♙e5! (D)



Removing the black king's main defender.

27...♙f7

27...♙xe5 28 ♗h5+.

28 ♗h5+ ♖g8 29 ♗g6! ♙d7

29...♙b3 30 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 31 ♗b6 ♙f7 32 ♗b7 graphically illustrates the power of the white queen.

30 ♙xg7 ♜xg7 31 ♗d6

Threatening ♗xd5 and ♗xa3.

31...♖h7 32 ♗xa3!

I am sure the loss of this pawn did not please Shirov because Black no longer has counterplay against the gradual advance of the white pawns.

32...d7 33 ♗e3 dxe6 34 d5 d5 35 f4 d3+ 36 ♖h1 ♙a2 37 f5

37 g3h3? gives Black good drawing chances, e.g. 37...g2 38 ♙b1 ♗h2+ 39 ♖g1 ♙ag2+ 40 ♖f1 ♙a2 41 f5 ♙b5+ 42 ♙xb5 ♙a1+ 43 ♗e1 ♗h1+. 37...d5 38 f6 ♙g6 39 f7 1-0

Conclusion

1) 8 ♙b1 is dangerous because it is difficult for Black to prevent White achieving an ideal central set-up with the knight on f3 and bishop on e2.

2) The line with 10...♙a5+ followed by taking on a2 and playing 12...♙g4 is the most convincing answer to this idea. It directly exploits the weakness of the a2-pawn and immediately applies pressure to the centre.

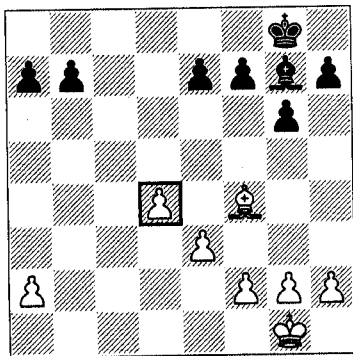
3) Against 13 ♙e3 Black does best to play 13...dxc6 14 d5 dxa5 because White's most threatening ideas are less problematic when there is no pawn on h6 to defend.

4) Against 13 ♙g5 Black does best to play 13...h6 to limit the scope of the bishop. After 14 ♙e3 dxc6 15 d5, 15...dxe5 is thought best because now the h6-pawn would be a problem if Black played 15...dxa5 but it is now useful for preventing the recurrence of ♙g5. 15...♙xf3!? may also be good, and has been less thoroughly analysed.

5) After 14 ♙h4!?, 14...♗e6! appears to be adequate for Black but has not yet been thoroughly tested.

10 Delroy's Granite Statue

"A genius! For thirty-seven years I've practised fourteen hours a day, and now they call me a genius!" – Pablo Saraste, Spanish Violinist and Composer (1844-1908) on being hailed as a genius by a critic



granite to flesh in seconds and has been known to run all the way to d8 before the tourists can finish taking their photographs.

These structures can arise from various lines where White captures on d5 but doesn't play e4:

- 1) 4 cxd5 ♟xd5 5 ♚b3 ♞xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 e3 with ...cxd4, cxd4 happening at later stage;
- 2) 4 ♞f3 ♟g7 5 e3 0-0 6 cxd5 ♟xd5 7 ♟c4 ♞xc3 8 bxc3 c5, etc.; and also
- 3) some g3 lines.

However, this structure most often arises from the ♟g5 lines where White retreats the bishop to f4 after ...♞e4. The venom in this approach has been demonstrated by Grandmasters Yusupov, Bareev and Zviagintsev to name but a few. The venom is by no means the type to kill you in seven seconds but it can kill you nonetheless and usually it is slow and painful. If you are wondering how something made of granite can produce venom, just imagine your most feared serpent sliding around the statue's neck, visible only to those who believe. The death toll is usually very high because black players don't

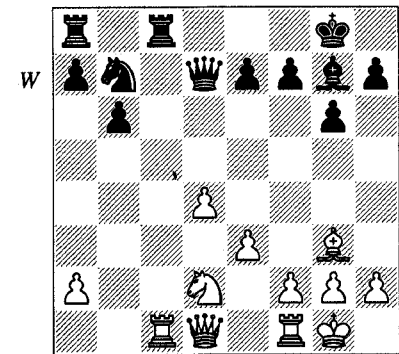
In Chapter 3 we observed that Delroy can be both a fearsome beast and a frightened bunny.

Indeed, I have come to consider Delroy's character sufficiently rich and diverse to build a statue in his honour. This statue is on d4 and is firmly supported by the scaffolding built on the f2-e3 pawn-chain. However you have conceived of Delroy up to now, form this image on granite because in the examples we are about to consider he is indeed like a rock, standing firm in the centre of the board and giving Black no chance to run away with him. Indeed, if anyone is going to run, it is Delroy, who often transforms from

realize they have been bitten until it is too late. The following two games demonstrate this, and thereafter we will concentrate on vital de-fanging techniques.

The absence of central counterplay

Game 25
Bareev – Dvoirys
Kiev 1996



1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 d5 4 ♟g5 ♞e4 5 ♟f4 ♟xc3 6 bxc3 ♟g7 7 e3 c5 8 ♞f3 ♟c6 9 cxd5

9 ♚b1!? has also been tried by Bareev (also after 8...0-0) but it seems that Black has no theoretical problems if we follow Bareev-Beliavsky, Linares 1992: 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 0-0 11 ♚a4!? (11 ♟e2 dxc4! 12 ♟xc4 ♞a5! 13 ♟d3 ♟e6 gives Black a good position since he can use c4 as a base for queenside counterplay: 14 ♚e2 a6!) 11...♟d7! 12 ♚a3 (12 ♚xb7 e5!) 12...♟g4!, when Black is aggressively using his development lead to attack White's centre and already has an edge.

9...♚xd5 10 ♟e2 cxd4 11 cxd4 0-0 12 0-0 b6?!

I recommend 12...♟f5! in Game 27.

13 ♟d2 ♟b7 14 ♟f3 ♚d7 15 ♚c1 ♞a5 16 ♟xb7 ♟xb7 17 ♟g3 ♚fc8 (D)

It would seem that Black has little to complain about here. For starters Delroy is positively tame and the c-file is comfortably contested. Moreover, if White's not going to threaten Black in

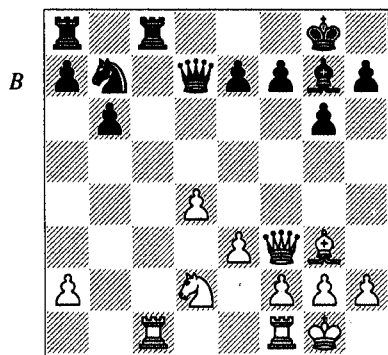
the centre it would seem that there is no obvious antidote to Black's long-term plan of creating a passed pawn on the queenside, and surely we are allowed to say that White's a-pawn is a little bit weak.

I'll certainly grant that, but the only piece ever likely to threaten the a-pawn is the black queen, which will almost certainly be needed to hold Black's central squares. Indeed, things are generally not so rosy for Black. Firstly we must acknowledge that White occupies and controls the centre to a greater extent than Black, and secondly we must compare the bishops, which is often a good way to begin to evaluate a position. Clearly the bishop on g3 is fairly satisfied with his work on the h2-b8 diagonal, which helps restrain the ...e5 pawn-break and target c7 for future entry by a major piece. It also has some ideas of attacking e7 on the h4-d8 diagonal or maybe exchanging off Black's sole defender on the kingside when the time is right. The bishop on g7, however, has no obvious role to play and effectively bites the

granite on d4 which is no doubt a highly unpleasant experience. In fact, the crux of the matter is that Black has lost the battle for the centre and is in danger of drifting into a position without a plan.

The absence of central pressure allows White considerable scope for manoeuvre and possibilities to play on the wings, particularly on the kingside in this position because Black's knight does not have a good route over there and if it were to try passing through d6 White would almost certainly take it off, leaving active queen and knight against queen and passive bishop. Of course Black is not losing here by any means but I suspect many Grünfeld players would feel very confident here as Black, and this is definitely misguided. Black has to realize that something has gone wrong with the opening and put the defensive hat on.

18 ♖f3! (D)



The queen sniffs the c6-square while announcing her presence on the kingside.

18...♙xc1!?

Black decides to exchange rooks. If he were not a strong grandmaster with considerable experience in the Grünfeld I would have suspected Dvoiry's decision of being a big strategic error.

Firstly, hindsight will tell us that the resulting positions without rooks favour White.

Secondly, Black did not need to hurry with this idea for he actually controls the 'levers' of the c-file in the sense that White can only choose to exchange one rook but Black can exchange one and then challenge on the c-file again. It is a well-known chess principle that tension tends to benefit the side which can release it because it provides the advantage of always having an extra choice which your opponent doesn't have.

It results here from Black controlling c8 but White not controlling c1, which is a common feature of these lines. White's main chance to change this is ♘b3 and since the knight on b7 looks sub-optimal anyway it is well worth considering...

a) 18...♘a5, which also frees the black queen to harass the white a-pawn. However, after 19 ♘b3!? ♘xb3 (19...♘c4 20 ♙xc4!; 19...♙a4?! 20 ♘xa5 ♙xa5 21 ♙b7!) 20 axb3 it is still not plain sailing for Black: 20...a5 21 d5! intending ♙c6 is better for White, as is 20...e6 21 ♙c4!. 20...♙xc1 21 ♙xc1 ♙c8 22 ♙xc8+ ♙xc8 23 h4! is also better for White because it's very difficult to create a passed pawn on the queenside and the g7-bishop is

still choked up. Basically, White has a space advantage and his pieces have more scope.

b) 18...b5!/? is a fairly chunky move and makes some sense of the black set-up. The knight on b7 does a good job of guarding the c5-square and now White's idea of ♘c4-e5 has been scuppered it is not obvious what White is doing. That said, Black is not completely out of the woods after 19 ♘b3 since 19...a5 20 ♘c5 ♘xc5 21 ♙xc5! (21 dxc5? ♙c6! is better for Black) 21...♙xc5 22 ♙xa8+ ♙c8 23 ♙xa5 wins a pawn.

c) 18...e5? 19 ♘c4! exd4 20 ♘e5 is very powerful for White.

d) 18...♘c5 19 dxc5 ♙xd2 20 ♙b7! is not even a sandwich, never mind a picnic for Black.

So probably Dvoiry's felt that on this occasion the tension on the c-file was not so favourable after all since Black couldn't extract any benefit from it.

19 ♙xc1 ♙c8 20 ♙xc8+ ♙xc8 21 h4!

You wouldn't have thought that Black's kingside felt particularly threatened at this point, but that's mainly because it's not. Yet.

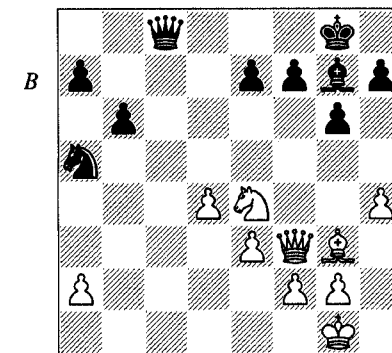
The point is that White's sturdy centre gives him control of the game and so by softening up the kingside Bareev is merely trying to discourage Black from travelling too far away from his king while he probes and presses and generally looks around. Of course, at the risk of being mundane, I suppose he also wanted to avoid being back-rank mated.

21...♘a5

This seems reasonable for the knight looks like an under-achiever and it is unlikely that it had better prospects on d8. Still, it would seem that b7 may in fact be the knight's best square at the moment and so Black should have preferred a waiting move like 21...h6.

Note that 21...♙c1+ 22 ♘h2! ♙xd2 23 ♙xb7 ♙xa2 24 ♙xe7 leaves the black king feeling somewhat intimidated by White's aggressive femininity.

22 ♘e4 (D)



Here we have the first whiff of some threats; ♘g5 is in the air and Delroy is beginning to warm up.

22...h6!?

Again it would be all too easy to criticize this move but ♘g5 really would be a bit too close to the goal and I don't see any way of catching White offside. Moreover, I don't see any way to transform the disadvantage:

a) 22...♙c6 is answered by 23 d5! ♙xd5? 24 ♘f6+.

b) 22...♙f5 is a reasonable try, as the endgame may well be tenable after

23 ♖xf5 gxf5 24 ♘c3 ♘c6. However, I suspect such an exchange would be unduly kind to Black and so I prefer 23 ♙f4!, when Black is left with all his old problems.

c) Perhaps 22...h5 should be considered, when ...♗g4 looks like an idea so White would probably try 23 ♘g5, which obliges 23...♙f6!?. White is still much better but at least Black's position is not getting any worse in a hurry, e.g. 24 ♙e5?! ♙xg5 25 hxg5 ♖c6!.

23 ♙f4!?

A very patient way to continue the attack; Bareev will push the h-pawn only when he is fully ready.

23...♖c1+?

This looks like it doesn't help the black cause; indeed I suspect it's the decisive mistake. Black's main problem at the moment is his lack of anchorage in the centre and since ...e6 weakens d6 and f6 Black has to hold fort with his queen and knight. I wonder then if Black shouldn't just do very little and try not to make any concessions. 23...♘b7!? looks like a reasonable attempt in this respect. White is unlikely to cause damage with Delroy as long as the knight remains controlling d6 and it's not clear if White has what it takes to checkmate the black king. Of course this suggests that Black erred on move 21 but this was probably a good moment to forgive and forget.

24 ♖h2 ♖c2 25 ♘g3! ♘c6

25...♖c6!? 26 d5 looks fully justified for White, who is ready for further advances in the centre.

26 ♖d5!

White's infiltration is painfully slow but Black still hasn't found counterplay. Note that White's three pieces are a cohesive, centrally focused group while Black's forces are scattered and ineffective.

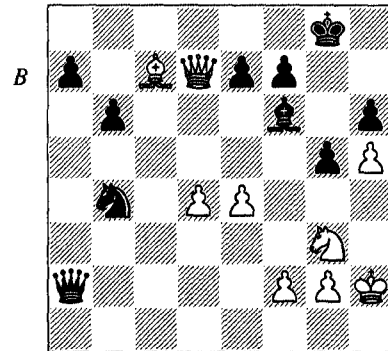
26...♙f6 27 h5! g5 28 ♙c7

A peculiar square, but it's good enough.

28...♘b4 29 ♖d7 ♖xa2

Black finally whips off the weakie, but the decentralization of queen and knight is too high a price.

30 e4! (D)



Fantastic timing by Bareev, who has used his centre as a strength without ever allowing it to be a source for black counterplay. Clearly Black's king is in serious danger now and I don't see any defence to the following brutal onslaught.

30...♖e6 31 ♖d8+ ♖h7 32 d5!

"He's alive, ...alive!!"

32...♖g4 33 ♖f8 ♘d3 34 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 35 ♖f8+ ♖h7 36 ♖f7+ ♖h8 37 e5! ♘xe5 38 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 39 ♖f8+

♖h7 40 ♖xe7+ ♙g7 41 d6! ♖b4 42 ♖e6 ♖d4 43 d7! ♙f6 44 ♖f7+ ♖h8 45 ♖e8+ ♖h7 46 ♘e4! 1-0

A controlled and powerful display by Bareev, who brilliantly highlighted the dangers which Black faces when he doesn't have central counterplay.

Game 26

Ruban – Dvoirys

Russian Ch 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♙g7 5 ♙g5 ♘e4 6 ♙f4 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 e3 ♘c6

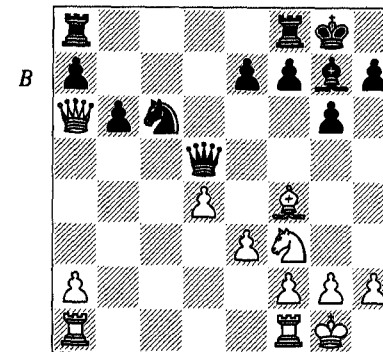
For 8...0-0! see Game 27.

9 cxd5 ♖xd5 10 ♙e2

10 ♖b3!?

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 0-0 12 0-0 b6?!

13 ♖a4!? ♙b7 14 ♙a6 ♙xa6 15 ♖xa6 (D)



After roughly the same opening Dvoirys finds himself in a similar situation. Probably having appreciated the dangers of running out of ideas, he quickly finds an active plan which looks initially promising but is shown

to be inadequate once again because of White's formidable central control and the inability of the g7-bishop to contribute to the struggle. I will just give the moves with brief comments, which I feel tell a similar story to the previous game:

15...♘b4

15...e5 16 dxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 18 ♖fd1 ♖e6 19 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 20 ♖ac1 is a significant plus for White.

16 ♖a4 a5 17 a3 b5 18 ♖d1 ♘a6 19 ♖d2 b4 20 axb4 ♘xb4

Black's play has looked very purposeful but in reality he has just given himself a weakness. What follows is a good lesson in showing that however much advantage you think you have on a wing, the side who controls the centre invariably controls the game. The main problem is that White's bishop can attack the a-pawn while Black's bishop can't really defend it for fear of the weakness of the king-side.

21 ♙c7! ♘c6 22 ♖fc1 ♖a6 23 ♖c2! ♖fa8 24 ♖a4 e6 25 h3 ♖d7 26 ♙g3 ♖b6 27 ♖c4 ♖b7 28 ♖ac1 ♖aa6 29 ♙d6! ♙f8 30 ♙xf8 ♖xf8 31 ♘g5 ♖b4 32 ♖a1! h6 33 ♘h7+ ♖g7 34 d5+ ♖xh7 35 dxc6 ♖c8 36 c7 ♖xc4 37 ♖xc4 ♖a7 38 ♖e5! a4 39 ♖c5 ♖a8 40 ♖e7 ♖g7 41 ♖f4 1-0

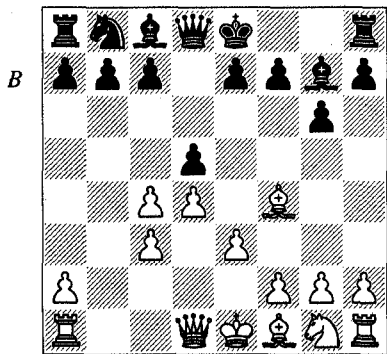
The ...e7-e5 pawn-break

Of course the most substantial way to dismantle Delroy's statue (and kill the snake) is to remove the d4-pawn by means of the break ...e7-e5. White usually fights hard to prevent this, but

as we are about to see, this break can be incredibly powerful if Black can make it work.

Game 27
Hertneck – Anand
Munich 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♕g5
♜e4 5 ♕f4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3 ♕g7 7 e3 (D)



7...c5!

I suggest that it is best to attack the centre immediately and generally to meet White's cxd5 with the tit-for-tat-like ...cxd4; only after White has played cxd4 should you recapture with the queen on d5. The point is that when White plays ♖b3 Black is normally obliged to capture on b3 and if Black hasn't yet taken on d4 White can achieve a favourable endgame by taking back on d4 with the e-pawn, which would be generally undesirable without the queen exchange.

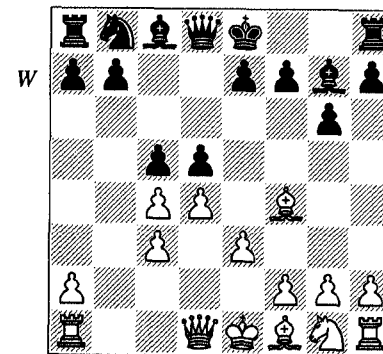
7...0-0 8 cxd5 ♖xd5 9 ♖b3 ♖a5 10 ♖b4 ♖xb4 11 cxb4 c6 is slightly better for White according to GM Ernst but

this line is by no means the whole story because if nothing else Black can try 11...e5!?, which is much less compliant and more in the spirit of the Grünfeld. It seems to me that this move equalizes and it's well worth understanding something about the resulting positions. 12 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 13 dxe5 ♜c6 14 a3 ♜xe5 15 ♕e2 looks like a plausible continuation. White obviously wants to play ♜f3 and take back on f3 with the bishop unless Black unwisely allows the knight to hop to the d4-square. In such positions the position of the kings and White's plan of a minority attack potentially make Black's queenside very weak so Black is well advised not to play passively as White would then have good chances of creating a queenside weakness, winning it and then pressing with the extra kingside pawn.

GM Keith Arkell has practically made a living out of such strategies and I assure you that Black has to think carefully here. Even if you are somewhat bored by such positions, it is all too easy to lose them by thinking that they are easy to play. 15...♕f5?! 16 ♜f3 ♜d3+ 17 ♕xd3 ♕xd3 is a case in point. This may look like a try to play for the advantage of bishop against knight in an open position but White's knight is unassailable on d4 and Black's bishop has nothing to attack. Moreover, White's prospects for queenside pressure remain, and Black has no counterplay. Instead of such a blind transformation, we should ask: what is positive about the black position? The queenside majority? No! As

I've just explained, Black's potential problem is that his queenside majority is very susceptible to attack. Black's lead in development is significant, however, and so I like 15...a5! 16 b5 ♕d7!, which disrupts White's smooth development plan and seems to offer Black good chances since ...c6 is on the cards. I mention this to highlight once again the importance of understanding Grünfeld endgames well, but of course from a theoretical perspective I would definitely advise avoiding this and sticking with Anand's chosen move-order.

Returning to the position after 7...c5 (D):



8 ♜f3

Or 8 cxd5 ♖xd5 (8...cxd4! 9 cxd4 ♖xd5) and now:

a) 9 ♖f3 is a creative effort to achieve a small endgame plus but White's coordination is found wanting after 9...♖d8!, e.g. 10 ♕b5+ ♜d7 11 ♜e2 cxd4! 12 exd4 (12 cxd4 ♖a5+) 12...0-0, when Black has an excellent position.

b) 9 ♖b3!? has not been tried to my knowledge but it would seem that White has good chances for an edge here and this is why Black should prefer 8...cxd4!

8...0-0 9 cxd5

9 ♖b1 is likely to transpose to the note to White's 9th in Game 25, but 9 ♕e2!? is an important alternative. If Black is not careful he can fall under a slight disadvantage, as suggested in the game Portisch-Kramnik below. The reason that this Exchange Slav line is unlikely to be a direct transposition is that the Grünfeld player has the benefit of the tension between c5 and d4. This is in his favour because in most cases it is only in Black's interest to release it. Moreover, White normally castles before playing c4 in the Exchange Slav line so Black can consider taking advantage of White's centralized king. I have two suggestions here after 9...dxc4 10 ♕xc4:

a) 10...♖a5!? 11 0-0 ♜d7 as in Gofshtein-Kožul, Zagreb 1993.

b) Or my own idea: 10...♜c6 11 0-0 ♜a5 12 ♕e2 b6!?. Note that 13 dxc5?! is not dangerous on account of 13...♕d7.

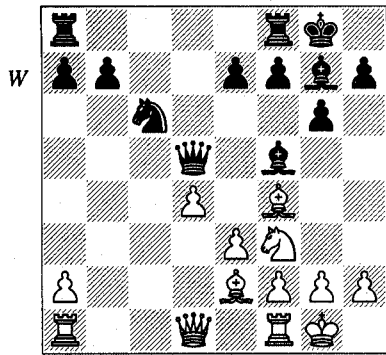
9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖xd5 11 ♕e2 ♜c6 12 0-0 ♕f5! (D)

I prefer this move to ...b6 for two main reasons: (1) it doesn't weaken the queenside or the knight on c6; (2) it controls b1 and so prevents White putting a rook there.

13 ♖a4

Alternatively:

a) 13 ♖b3 has been tried by Hungarian GM Varga, who seems to love



playing Grünfeld endgames for White. However, although untried thus far, 13... e6! looks like a very effective remedy because 14 xb7 xd4 15 xd5 xe2+ 16 h1 xd5 is not great for White, but then neither is anything else since when Black gets the bishop to d5 he will have a very active position in the endgame (as long as he endeavours to involve the g7-bishop!).

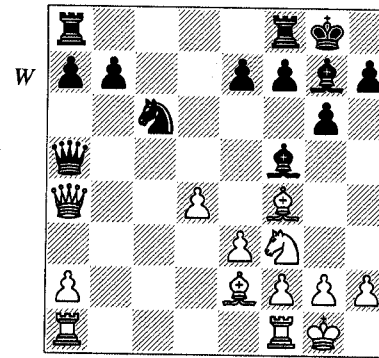
b) 13 c1 was played by Anand himself in the Wall Street Blitz tournament against GM Patrick Wolff. That game continued 13... xa2 14 d5 fd8 15 c4 a5 16 b3 b4 17 d6 and Black was in deep trouble since 17...e6 18 e4! is a problem. However, I suspect Anand was just being practical because it seems to me that 14... ad8! (not weakening f7) 15 c4 a3! (leaving a5 for the knight) suggests that White's position has run out of steam.

c) 13 h4!? was tried by a leading exponent of this system for White and so it deserves to be taken seriously. Zviagintsev-Kosebay, Iraklion ECC

1996 now continued 13... ad8? and after 14 xf5 xf5 15 c7! White was clearly better. However, I think it is better to play 13... e6 . Then 14 f3!? looks like the most obvious follow up, but after 14... a5 15 d5 (15 b1!? c4!? 16 e1 a6 is obviously not conclusive but I figure if Black can hold things together, White will have serious coordination problems on the kingside) 15... ad8 16 e4 f5! Black's forces are much the more coherent and 17 d2 a3 doesn't change anything. Note that these two moves, ... ad8 combined with ...f5, are a common tactical theme in the Grünfeld, which shows another good reason why Black's king's rook is often best left on f8. Still, I suspect Zviagintsev may have intended 14 b1!? , when Black can't play 14...g5 in view of 15 b5 . However, I now like the calm retreat 14... d7!? when a2 is *en prise*, ... a5-c4 is possible, White's h4-knight is poor and 15 a4? xd4 is simply a sign of the times. If that all seems too sharp, Zviagintsev-Leko, Tilburg 1998 saw 13... c8!? 14 a4 (14 f3 repeats) 14... xd4!? 15 exd4 e4 16 dxc6 hxc6 17 e3 g4! , when Black was definitely not worse.

13... a5! (D)

It may surprise you to see Anand moving his centralized queen to offer herself in exchange for White's less obviously useful lady. Still, this move can be seen as Anand's acute recognition of the threat of ac1-c5 , which would be very disruptive, and Black also has some hopes of using the c4-square after the queen exchange.

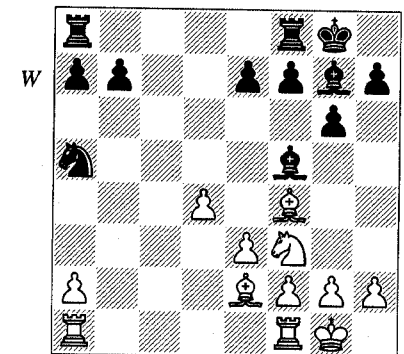


14 xa5

14 b3!? was the choice of GM Paul van der Sterren in his game against GM Khuzman from Wijk aan Zee 1993 but after 14... b4! Black already had a good game. Obviously this assessment calls GM Varga's idea of 13 b3 into question but I think it is fair to say that Black already has some advantage because White has no queenside pressure and it is difficult to deal with the threat of ... xb3 followed by ... b4 . Play continued 15 fc1 ac8! (it is sometimes better to put the other rook on this square but here this would lose: 15... fc8? 16 xc6!) 16 h3 (a useful move, but obviously an encouraging sign for Black because it suggests that White has no particular plan) 16...a6! (on the other hand this move contains the clear idea of ... xb3 and ... b4) 17 d1 fd8! (preparing ...e5) 18 g4? (White's play seems rather disjointed; 18 f1 , trying to prevent ...e5, was necessary, when 18... $\text{a5!?$, preparing ...e5 and ... b4 , looks like an interesting try; 18 d3 xd3 19 xd3 e5 20 g5 d7!

(protecting b7 and f7) 21 ab1 a 22 b3 exd4 23 exd4 xd4 24 xd xc5 is an instructive line highlighting Black's superior coordination 18... e4 19 d2 e5! (this central blow is even more effective considering White's gratuitous weakening of the kingside; 20 xe4 exf4 21 ab1 e 22 f3 would now leave Black ideally placed to attack White's tender centre) 20 g5 (White was probably relying on this, but most Grünfeld players have a strong sense of the importance of the centre and here, having won the battle in the centre, it is no surprise that Black can afford to sacrifice material to help to win the game; 20... exd4! 21 c4 (21 xe4 dxe3 22 d3 xa1 23 xa1 e5 wins, and so does 21 xd8 xd8! 22 c4 b2 23 c1 dxe3 24 xb2 xb2 25 d1 d4); 21... b2 22 ac1 dxe3 23 xe3 d5 24 c2 e5 25 f1 f6 26 c4 b4 27 c3 xa2 . The force of Black's central onslaught now caused the strong Dutch GM to resign.

14... xa5 (D)

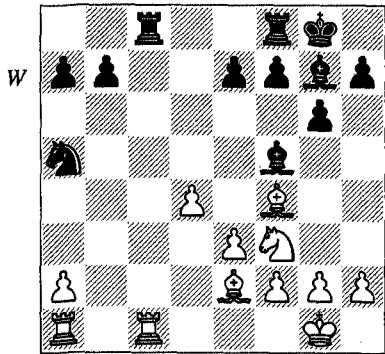


15 ♖fc1

Most sources claim that the position is now equal but I think this assessment is called into question by the current game.

15 ♖c7!? is no better since although 15...b6?! is undesirable (it always gives White the annoying option of ♖a6 to challenge for the c-file and just generally weakens the queenside), Black can play 15...♟c6, which is fully adequate since Black will probably follow up with ...♜fc8 and dispel the wayward bishop on c7. Note that it's generally OK to weaken f7 after the queens are exchanged and since there is usually little for a rook to do on the d-file the optimal squares for the rooks tend to be on the queenside, where they can use the c-file or help with the pawn majority. Moreover, it is useful to free the f8-square for Black's king or bishop so unless Black thinks an early ...e5 is on the cards it is more useful to have the second rook (i.e. the one not on c8) on a8 rather than f8.

15...♜ac8! (D)

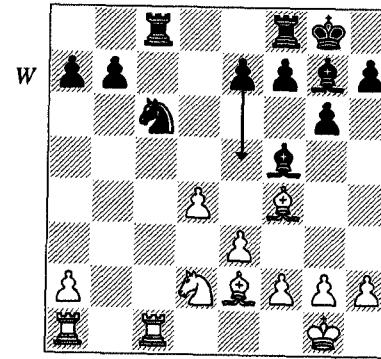


Confused? You should be. Anand is strong enough to see beyond positional generalities and will already have been thinking in concrete terms about the next few moves. Given enough time, Black would like to play something like ...♜fd8, ...♟f8 and ...e6 perhaps followed by ...♟a3. Since White cannot afford to cede the c-file and cannot use b1 it seems that he will have to do something creative with his minor pieces. What might this be? White's opening strategy is based around the passivity of the g7-bishop and so he is unlikely to want to exchange it off with ♟e5. Moreover, it doesn't hurt Black positionally to play ...f6 here; indeed it just helps to control the centre since his bishop is doing little on g7 anyway and will probably want to re-route to the f8-a3 diagonal. Hence ♟g5 is also not a problem. The light-squared bishop has nowhere to go and so that leaves the knight. It has no prospects on e5 but may want to come to b3 to relieve the tension on the queenside and by coming to d2 White frees f3 for the bishop. When it starts its journey it will weaken the e5-square, giving Black some chances to play ...e5 with the aid of ...♟c6, but if White's bishop is on f3, the b7-pawn will be *en prise* when Black recaptures with the knight on e5. In this case he won't want a rook stuck on a8, but rather in a safe place with prospects to come to d8 or c8 at a later stage. Hence ...♜ac8 was preferable to ...♜fc8 in this case, but only because Black was thinking concretely and aiming for ...e5.

16 ♟d2

I made this sound like White's only move, which of course it is not. If I put my objective hat on, it seems that White can probably come close to equalizing with 16 ♜c7! ♜xc7 17 ♟xc7 ♟c6 18 ♜c1 although after 18...♟b4!? I think I would rather be Black as I need not rush into exchanging rooks, and White has some coordination problems.

16...♟c6! (D)



A touch of class. Anand realizes that the knight is no longer optimal on a5 and so re-centralizes while highlighting White's lack of central control. Not only does Black threaten ...e5 but ...♟b4 is also in the air.

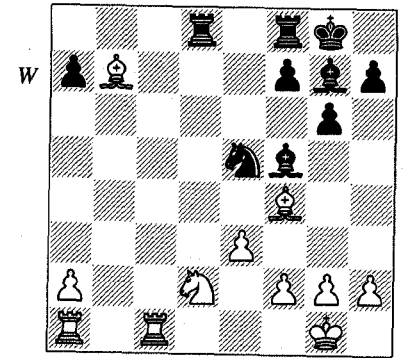
17 ♟f3

17 ♟f3 is met by 17...♟b4!, but 17 ♟c4!? looks like a better move since 17...b5 18 ♟e5 ♟xe5 19 dxe5 is not especially clear. However, 17...♟b4 still looks fairly devilish.

17...e5! 18 dxe5 ♟xe5 19 ♟xb7

Thankfully there isn't a black rook on a8.

19...♜cd8! (D)



White's position is in disarray and the d3-square is especially tender. Indeed, ...♟d3 threatens to win the exchange and White has no good defence. Note the explosion of energy which can result from a successful pawn-break and note how attentive Anand was to the details needed to make this work effectively.

20 e4 ♟e6 21 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 22 ♟f3 ♟xa1 23 ♟xa1 ♟d7 24 ♟c6 ♜c7 25 ♟d5 ♜fc8 0-1

The exchange of rooks leaves White hopelessly lost.

The c4-square

So we now know that one of Black's strategic aims is to exercise the pawn-break ...e7-e5, but White doesn't always allow this and so it's good to know that Black has other ways of playing. As is often the case in the Grünfeld, one of the main sources for Black's counterplay is the c4-square. Firm control of this point will tend to grant Black good play since it is usually synonymous with central stability,

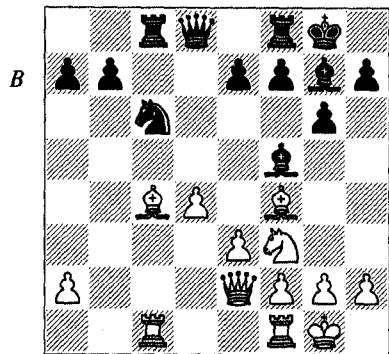
a secure queenside and prospects to advance the queenside pawns in safety. It is also important to know that a knight on c4 makes a good contribution to controlling the e5-square without the lingering annoyance of Delroy messing it about, as he would if the knight were on c6. The following game should help to highlight these points.

Game 28
Portisch – Kramnik
Biel IZ 1993

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 ♖f3 ♗f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♙f4 ♚e4!? 7 e3 ♗xc3 8 bxc3 g6! 9 ♙e2 ♙g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 c4 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♙f5

12...a6!? and 12...♙g4!? are other possibilities.

13 ♖c1 ♖c8 14 ♗e2 (D)



Purists may object to the inclusion of this game, which actually arrived from an Exchange Slav, but I have found no better game to show how Black can use the c4-square to great effect in these structures and it is not at

all difficult to find a direct transposition from the Grünfeld.

14...a6!?

Kramnik's play in this game makes a deep impression and this is because every move seems to have been very carefully considered. The immediate 14...♗a5 would be the instinctive choice of most players but 15 ♙d3 ♙xd3 16 ♗xd3 ♗d7 17 ♗a3! is a very logical continuation which annoys Black by disallowing ...♗c4 due to a7 being *en prise*. Also, ...b5 is now a possibility in several positions.

15 h3?

Portisch plays a surprisingly vague move which hands the initiative to Black. It is useful to prevent ...♙g4 and give the king a breathing space on h2 but it is more important to appreciate Black's intentions and be particularly alert to the potential weakness of the c4-square.

15 ♖fd1 is slightly more useful but it wouldn't prevent the strategy employed by Black in the game.

15 d5! is much more testing. Although it is good news for Black that the g7-bishop can breathe more deeply, it is also true that this is a good answer to the question posed by ...a6, i.e. what are you doing? Portisch evaded the question, but this move does not. Indeed White has good chances of obtaining an advantage now and although it is not very relevant to us theoretically, it should serve as a reminder not to be too fixed in one's strategic conceptions. Normally White wants to uphold Delroy's statue but occasionally Delroy likes to remind people that he

is also alive in the flesh. 15...♗a5 16 e4 is simply better for White, who has won the central battle. 15...b5!? is possible, though, when 16 dxc6 bxc4 17 e4 (17 c7 ♗d3) 17...♙e6 is just unclear but 16 ♙b3! ♗a5 17 e4 is again better for White due to his central control.

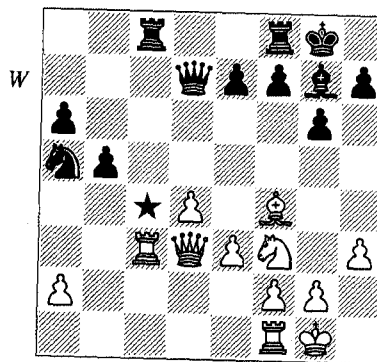
15...♗a5! 16 ♙d3

Of course, without the centre mobilized 16 ♙b3?! ♗xb3 17 axb3 ♗d5! is not good news for White.

16...♙xd3 17 ♗xd3 ♗d7 18 ♖c3

18 e4 ♗a4 gives good counterplay on the centre and queenside, while 18 ♗a3 ♗c4 19 ♗b4 (19 ♗b3 b5 is slightly better for Black) 19...b5 20 a4 ♗b6 21 axb5 ♗d5 will give Black a small structural advantage.

18...b5! (D)



Black is now slightly better according to Kramnik.

The knight on c4 will be a fantastic piece, spreading its would-be Pegasus wings to the b6-d5 route and e5-square. Black's queenside majority is solid, and a good long-term asset which

more or less rules out any queenside play by White. The a2-pawn is a little weak in some lines and the c-file is only ever likely to be useful to Black since White has nothing to attack in the black position and therefore no reason to be excited by prospects of infiltration on c7. The only plan for White involves trying to push the centre pawns but of course this will reactivate the g7-bishop and may leave White with too much territory to defend. Moreover, note that c3 is also potentially weak and is not particularly difficult for Black to access. Indeed, although it's not obvious here, one of Black's main plans is to bring the knight to d5 to try to win the c-file by forcing rook exchanges.

19 ♖fc1

White must avoid 19 ♖a3? ♗c4! 20 ♖xa6? ♗b7.

On the other hand, 19 ♖xc8!? ♖xc8 20 ♗a3 ♗d8 21 e4 is probably White's best continuation at this point; it is given without comment by Kramnik. It undoubtedly loosens the centre, and allows the bishop on g7 to start his warm-up exercises after a long period on the bench, but at least White is doing something to prevent Black from completely taking control of the game. Indeed, ♙d2 is suddenly an annoying threat. 21...♖c4!? is now worthy of attention. It's not easy to find another good move for Black here but I like this one since it solves the problem of defending a6 actively while allowing for ...♗c4. It's a somewhat paradoxical move considering its aim but it's the type of thinking required to maintain

the initiative in such positions. Of course the rook is destined for a4, from where it will laterally attack the centre; it's good on c8 in general but Black has a particular problem to solve and I think this is the way to do it. Then 22 ♕d2 ♖a4 23 ♕xa5 ♖xa5 24 ♜b3 ♖a4 looks slightly better for Black.

19...♖c4 20 ♜e2

Or:

a) 20 ♖d2 e5! (a major benefit of having a knight on c4) 21 dxe5 ♜xd3 22 ♜xd3 ♖xe5 23 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 is clearly better for Black, who can be proud of his queenside pawn majority on this occasion.

b) 20 e4 f5! is also an important one to consider: especially with the light-squared bishops exchanged, this is a great way to gain central squares.

20...♖b6!

Very controlled. Kramnik avoids 20...e6 21 a4!

21 ♜c7?!

This is only superficially active since Black has no weaknesses to attack. Perhaps White should have tried 21 ♕e5!? because in this particular context the f4-bishop is no better than its counterpart, which at least always has the long-term prospect of being liberated with an eventual ...e5. The f4-bishop, however, seems completely without a role here and that's mainly because Black is in complete control of the queenside.

21...♜e6 22 ♕g5?!

White's moves resonate a dull scratching sound suggesting a semi-conscious awareness of his imminent

demise. In other words, Portisch doesn't know what to 'do' in a strategic sense so he 'does' something to pass the time. Instead:

a) 22 e4?! ♜xc7 23 ♕xc7 (23 ♜xc7? ♖d5) 23...♜c8 24 ♕f4 ♜xc1+ 25 ♕xc1 ♜c6 (25...f5!?) 26 ♕f4 e6 intending ...a5 and ...b4 is very good for Black.

b) 22 ♖g5 ♜f5 23 g4? ♜xc7 24 ♜xc7 ♜b1+ 25 ♖g2 ♖d5 is also strong for Black

c) 22 ♕e5!? was still White's best chance.

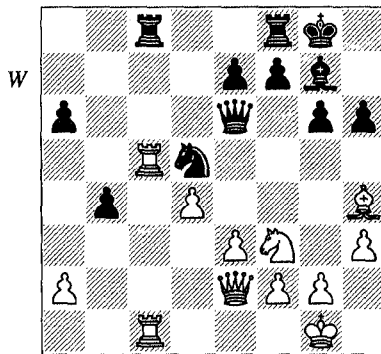
22...♖d5 23 ♜7c5

23 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 24 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 25 e4 ♖c3 is heavy-duty infiltration.

23...h6

A tidy move, giving the king a cushion to rest his head on h7.

24 ♕h4 b4! (D)

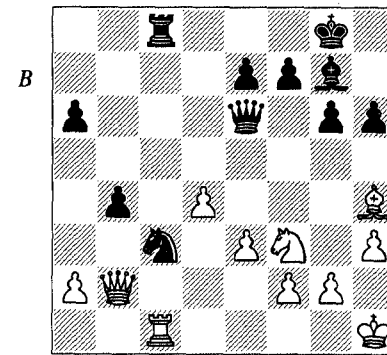


Kramnik moves in for the controlled finale. It is distressing for White that things looked bleak when the knight was on c4 and now look bleaker as it heads for c3. Goodness knows what will happen if it ever arrives on c2!

25 ♜b2

25 ♜c4 ♜xc5 26 ♜xc5 (26 dxc5 ♖c3 27 ♜xe6 fxe6 28 ♜c2 g5 29 ♕g3 ♜c8) 26...♖c3 27 ♜c2 ♜e4!? shows the extent of Kramnik's control.

25...♖c3 26 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 27 ♖h1 (D)



27...♖h7!!

It must be a particularly fine cushion for the king to demand two exclamation marks for his arrival on it, or perhaps just a vain king. Of course the point is to play ...♖a4 without allowing a check as the rook is lifted from c8, an ugly affair which would no doubt be an indignity to His Majesty. Still, it is beautiful that such a distant and quiet move on the kingside can have such a devastating effect on the queenside. It is also a wonderfully replete semi-echo of White's last move.

27...a5 is also good, if obvious, but White has some chances after 28 a3! ♖a4 29 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 30 ♜b3 ♜c1+ 31 ♖h2 ♜xa3 32 ♜d5! with counter-play.

28 ♖a1

The only move.

28...a5!

It's time.

29 ♜b3?!

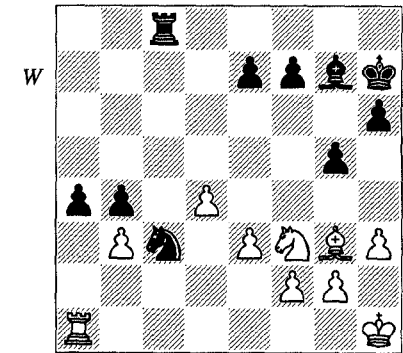
29 ♖d2! was slightly more stubborn but Black would still find a way of liberating his bishop, and in all probability this would break White's fragile position.

29...♜xb3 30 axb3 g5

Closing the channel to e7 and opening a window for the king.

31 ♕g3 a4! (D)

Black's play has been beautifully thematic and he is now completely winning.



32 ♖d2

32 bxa4 b3 33 ♖d2 b2 34 ♜e1 ♖xa4.

32...a3

That is one big pawn.

33 ♜c1

33 ♖c4 ♜xc4 34 bxc4 a2.

33...e5!

The patient bishop has his moment after all, but White's main problem is the prospect of the opening of the d-file.

34 d5

34 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 35 dxe5 ♜d8 36 ♜c4 ♜d1+ 37 ♜xd1 ♜xd1.

34...a2 35 ♜a1 e4!

For me this is the sweetest moment of a beautiful game. There is material equality but all of Black's pieces are vastly superior to their counterparts and Alfred is singing while the white rook holds his head in despair.

36 d6 ♜a8 37 ♜c4

37 d7 ♜d8 – harmony.

37...♜b5 38 ♖e5 ♜xd6!

Words are measly things at moments like this, but in case you hadn't already noticed, my admiration for

Kramnik's play in this game is total.

39 ♜xa2 ♜xa2 40 ♖xd6 ♜xf2 41 ♖xb4 ♜f1+ 42 ♜h2 ♜b1 0-1

Conclusion

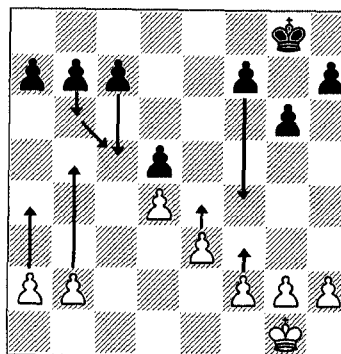
1) The 'granite statue' structures are very deceptive and Black can easily fall into a planless position without seeming to do much wrong. The main difficulty is that the white centre restricts the g7-bishop and makes it difficult for Black to achieve central counterplay.

2) In most cases Black has to strive for the ...e5 break or the occupation of the c4-square.

11 A Pint of Carlsberg

"Wink at small faults, for you have great ones yourself." – Scottish Proverb

The Carlsbad Structure



This pawn configuration has been called the Carlsbad structure and often arises from the ♖g5 and e3 lines of the Grünfeld. It is actually far more common to find this structure in the Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined, however, so I can only assume that the structure's name was derived from someone spotting Carl playing a sly QGD, and then telling him off for not playing the Grünfeld. At any rate, I think we should stop criticizing and start encouraging. In fact, I decided to buy Carl a pint, hence the title of this chapter.

A Grünfeld lover will not be shocked to find that White has an extra centre

pawn, but the closed nature of the position can be unsettling since most of the lines you will be used to examining tend to be rather more fluid, and offer more pawn-breaks. Indeed, since the centre is fairly locked, piece-play will be predominant. It is true that Black has the ...c5 break available, which can often be supported with ...b6 and this is particularly important in some of the e3 lines. In such cases Black may end up with hanging pawns on c5 and d5, which could be a weakness or a strength depending on who has the initiative. It is also true that Black can consider ...f5-f4 to undermine White's centre. Normally this is double-edged in such structures because the king can feel a worrying draught descending from the a2-g8 and a1-h8 diagonals, but unlike most lines of the QGD Black has a Grünfeld bishop to guard the king. Moreover, in the ♖g5 main line this bishop has no opponent and so any opening of the position tends to favour Black. It is true once again that White has the possibility of f3 and e4, but considering the pressure that the g7-bishop would then exert on d4, this is rare.

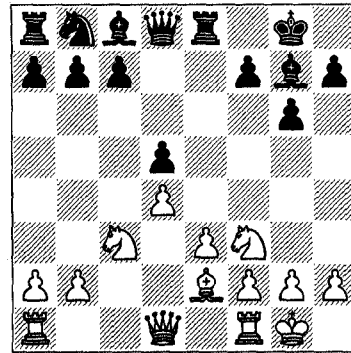
More commonly White will push his a- and b-pawn to instigate a minority attack on the black queenside.

Those unfamiliar with such an idea should just try to find a way in which Black can set up the queenside pawn-structure without allowing White's queenside pawns to create a weakness eventually. There isn't a way. Other things being equal, White will advance the b-pawn until there is a weakness on the half-open c-file and if the b-pawn is captured then there will be a weak pawn on the b-file and on d5. It is also worth noting that White's king is comforted by having an extra pawn to defend it. This may sound somewhat abstract but is a very real consideration since the logical counter to White's minority attack would be a similar idea with ...f5-f4 but then, assuming both sides have castled kingside, this would leave Black with only two pawns to shield his king compared to three for White. These are all important truths which will be at least partly verified in the games to follow. Still, I remember hearing the bad lion in *The Lion King* say that "Truth is in the eye of the beholder" and I behold that in such structures the placement of the pieces is of greater significance than any pawn-breaks.

Sample line and Ideas for White

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗g5 ♘e4 6 cxd5 ♘xg5 7 ♘xg5 e6 8 ♘f3 exd5 9 e3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♗e8 11 0-0 (D)

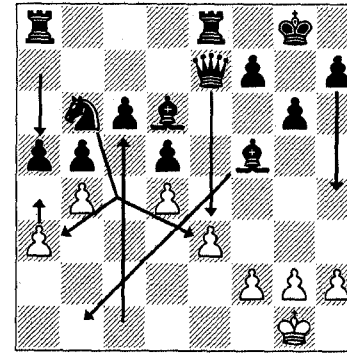
Some standard theoretical moves lead to the diagram position. White



has exchanged his dark-squared bishop for a black knight and seeks to show that in the resulting position the locked pawn-structure makes his e2-bishop 'good' and will suit the knights better than the black bishops. He also hopes that his extra central pawn may be a long-term strategic asset and will seek to use his queenside minority to create a weakness in Black's queenside structure while striving to keep his king safe and the centre closed. This line tends to appeal to players who dislike being confronted with activity when they are White and seek to nurture small advantages while being as safe as possible. However, while it is true that White has a slightly better pawn-structure, I think such positions are generally favourable to Black in the Grünfeld. The following diagram helps to illustrate Black's prospects.

Ideas for Black

I think Black's given piece configuration is more or less optimal for the quiet variation of the ♗g5 line, and I



am trying to demonstrate the principal means of defending against White's minority attack on the queenside while preparing counterplay on the kingside.

Please note that Black should be very careful about the timing of ...b5 as a response to b4. From a purely structural point of view it is lunacy of course because it presents an outpost on c5 and fixes a backward pawn on an open file. However, considering that White's queenside attack tends to be a prelude to piece infiltration, Black is really just acknowledging that this opening line obliges him to accept a weak queenside pawn in some shape or form and does so while simultaneously refusing to allow White the piece activity that he seeks on that side of the board. Principally, one should only meet b4 with ...b5 if there is a concrete follow-up planned, i.e. ...a7-a5 and/or ...♘b6-c4. In the first case the hunter may become the hunted as a3 (often played to support b4) can be weaker than c6. In the second case, the knight on c4 is really very annoying for White: firstly because it blocks the

c-file and therefore makes it almost impossible for White to attack the c-pawn and secondly because the piece sacrifice ...♘xe3 is often a very real possibility. Such a combination often results in Black earning three pawns (f2, e3 and d4) for his sacrificed piece and a persistent initiative which is often unbearable for White, who cannot offer resistance to Black's dark-squared bishop.

Although the diagram is a rather one-sided show, it is worth noting that White can often block out the a3-f8 diagonal by placing a knight on the outpost on c5. This is another drawback of playing ...b5 but in general the knight on c5 looks a lot better than it actually is, because it can serve merely to obstruct White's efforts to attack the c6-pawn.

It is also worth being alert to the sequence whereby White plays b4, Black plays ...b5 and if White anticipates ...♘b6-c4 he may choose to play a4 to immediately attack b5. Now capturing on a4 would lose control so Black has to plan ...b5 in such a way that he can either maintain his pawn on b5 with ...a6 (which sometimes allows a4-a5) or else play ...a5! at this moment, whereupon the a- and b-pawns will be head-to-head and concrete calculation will be needed to determine who gains control of the queenside.

With regard to the bishops, note that it is often useful for Black to put his bishop on f5 to control b1, which is where White would often wish to place his queen's rook to support his queenside advance. In saying that,

circumstances often do not permit Black to meet b4 with ...b5 and in these cases it is possible to play the knight to c4 in any case, though this will usually require the support of a bishop on e6.

The 'exclusive' bishop does not always go to d6, but it often finds itself restricted on g7 where it bites into White's solid centre, so it's worth knowing that it has the option of re-routing to d6 where it can influence both sides of the board.

As for the rooks, it seems it is often good to have one for defensive and counter-attacking purposes on the queenside and another to support Black's kingside pressure. The queen tends to be comfortable on the central e7-square but sometimes comes to d6 to defend c6 and attack b4 or possibly go to h4 to frighten the white king. Considering this, White will sometimes seek to defend his king with h3 or g3 and in these cases it is often possible to chisel the pawn on g3 or fix the dark squares on the kingside (after h3) with ...h5 and ...h4.

Carl's bad in the ♖g5 variation

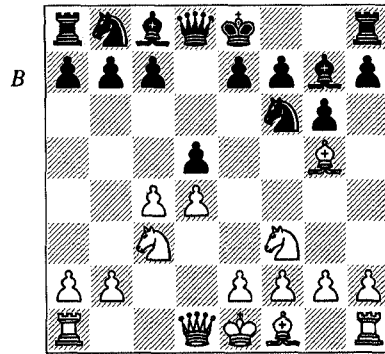
Game 29

Franco – Illescas

Spanish Cht (Ponferrada) 1997

1 d4 ♟f6 2 ♟f3 g6 3 c4 ♖g7 4 ♟c3 d5 5 ♖g5 (D)

I have always seen this move (with or without ♟f3) as an immediate threat



to the d5-pawn and therefore an attempt by White to develop with gain of time. Not uncommonly for the Grünfeld, it also features White developing his queenside before his kingside. Black has three main ways to 'defend' against the threat to d5 without losing time with a passive move like ...c6.

5...♟e4

I feel this is the most reliable reaction because it does not release the tension too early and does not oblige Black to sacrifice material before completing development, as the alternatives tend to do. On a more celestial level, we might say that this knight is living out its destiny; dying young as it does so often in the Grünfeld, so that his comrades may live.

5...c5!? is also possible and has been favoured by none less than GM Peter Svidler. The main justification of the move lies in the line 6 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 7 ♟xd5 ♖g7 8 e3 ♟c6, when Black threatens to play ...e6 and win back the d4-pawn while retaining dark-square control. However, I suggest

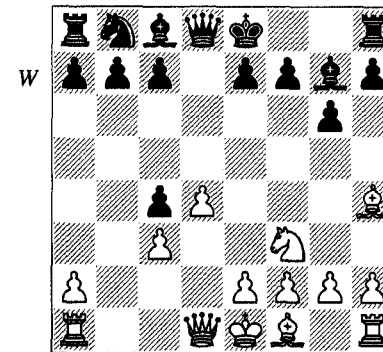
that you only play it if you think Black can generate enough compensation after 6 dxc5 ♖a5 7 cxd5 ♟e4 (7...♟xd5 8 ♖xd5 ♖xc3+ 9 ♖d2 is good for White – see the note to Black's 5th move in Game 33) 8 ♖d2 ♟xd2 9 ♖xd2 ♟a6 10 e3 ♟xc5 11 ♖b5+, which I'm far from sure he can.

5...dxc4 can also become very sharp, but it seems to me that the lines beginning with 6 e4 c5 7 d5 b5 8 d6! are favourable to White.

6 cxd5

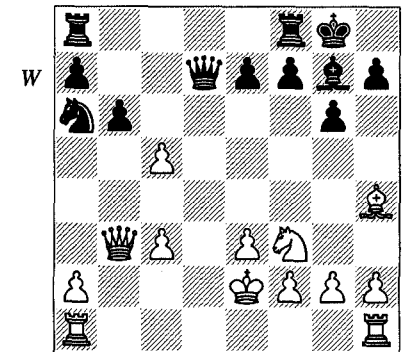
6 ♖f4 is not particularly distinctive with the knight on f3; see Chapter 10.

6 ♖h4 is not thought to be dangerous for Black, primarily because of 6...♟xc3 7 bxc3 dxc4! (D) when it's worth knowing something of the following:



a) 8 ♖a4+ is an attempt to win the pawn back, but this runs into 8...♖d7! 9 ♖xc4 b6! when the bishop can come to a6 and Black will be able to play ...c5. Note that this idea of ...♖d7 and ...♖b7 or ...♖a6 is a recurring theme in many lines of the Grünfeld. The

idea tends to be that since ...b6 weakens some queenside light squares and the a4-e8 diagonal, the queen 'covers' so that nothing nasty happens as the bishop gets dressed. Lautier-Ivanchuk, Terrassa 1991 is of interest: 10 e3 ♖a6 11 ♖b3 ♖xf1 12 ♟xf1 0-0 13 ♟e2 (White wants to play ♖hd1 and ♟f1 to connect rooks and secure his king) 13...c5 14 dxc5?! ♟a6! (D).



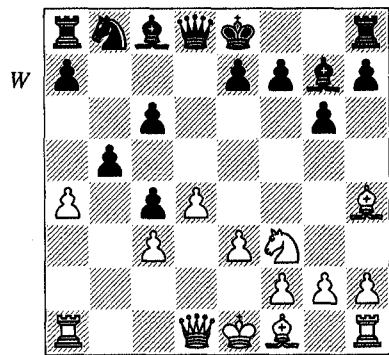
This is a particularly good example of a theme we have already considered. When Black supports the ...c5 break with ...b6 White sometimes captures on c5 with the aim of attacking Black's c5-pawn and using the b- and d-files if Black recaptures. However, as we see in this game, this attempted transformation can rebound on White if Black refuses to be materialistic. By attacking c5 (e.g. ...♖c7, ...♟d7, ...♟a6) Black threatens to recapture on c5 and restore material equality while gaining a structural advantage. Therefore White is obliged to be consistent and take on b6 as well. Not only does this venture lead to the

complete collapse of White's centre and lose a lot of time but it also opens up the c- and a-files for Black's rooks, gives Black various parking spaces on the queenside and allows the g7-bishop to take a deep breath on the a1-h8 diagonal.

Such a theme can also occur if the pawn is still on b7 and White captures on c5. If it is difficult to win this pawn back it is often worth considering ...b6 as a positional pawn sacrifice to free the black pieces.

The game continued 15 ♖hd1 ♜c7 16 cxb6 axb6 17 a4 ♘c5 18 ♜b4 ♞a5 19 ♙g3 e5! (blocking in the bishop on g7 but blocking out both of White's minor pieces and exerting even more control over the centre) 20 ♘d2 ♞fa8 21 ♘c4 ♘xa4! 22 ♚f1 ♙f8 23 ♘d6 ♘xc3 24 ♞ac1 ♞c5 25 ♞d3 ♘e4! and Ivanchuk's powerful play obliged Lautier to resign.

b) 8 e3 b5 9 a4 c6 (D) is considered a relatively safe pawn-grab for Black.

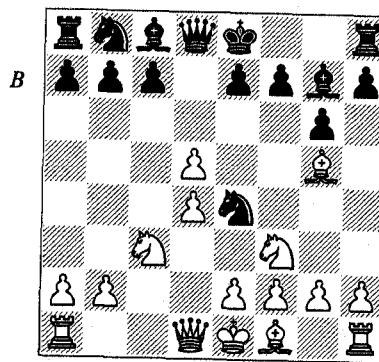


However, there is no denying that White can generate some initiative so

Black should be very careful over the next few moves. Moreover, playing ...dxc4 and ...b5 is fairly particular to this variation of ♙g5 and should not be mixed up with similar lines. Firstly, don't do it if the knight is still on g1 since ♜f3! (usually after exchanging on b5) can cause the rook on a8 to tremble and secondly don't do it if the bishop goes back to f4 since if nothing else Black often has to resort to playing ...♞a7 to keep the queenside intact, and if White were then simply to capture the knight on b8, this would not be a good day out. 10 ♙e2 a6 11 ♘d2 0-0 12 ♙f3 ♞a7 13 0-0 ♙f5 (this was Kasparov's approach; he wants to provoke e4 to block out the bishop on f3 or else plant his own bishop on the d3-square) 14 ♞e1 (14 e4 ♙c8! 15 e5 ♙e6) 14...♙d3 15 ♘b3 (this is somewhat annoying since White can force a draw if he wishes; if you find this unacceptable I recommend looking at ways of playing with ...♙b7 and ...♘d7 earlier, which might also be playable for Black; however, the world champion's openings are usually very well considered so try to be as objective as possible when looking for alternatives; it might be that a draw is best play for both sides – moreover, White may well not be satisfied with a draw, as was the case here) 15...♙f5 16 ♘d2 (16 ♘c5 ♘d7! is simply better for Black) 16...♙d3 17 g4? (White should have taken the draw) 17...♞c7! 18 ♘b3 cxb3 19 ♜xd3 c5! 20 ♙g3 e5! 21 axb5 c4 was winning for Black in Sorin-Kasparov, Buenos Aires simul 1997.

6 ♜c1 always struck me as being profoundly artificial but more the latter than the former. After 6...h6! White will be entering a normal line ♙f4 or ♙h4 line with his queen on an unusual square. Bear in mind, though, that White is probably not (yet!) worse and so Black should pay attention to the nuances which the white player will probably be more aware of. In particular it will be difficult to castle now. I'm not going to give variations because the line is very rare and more importantly it is good to get into the habit of trusting your openings and not relaxing when you find yourself with a position where an author has told you that you are OK. In other words let go of your chequered security blanket. I for one have no idea of the theory in this position but I'm comfortable enough with the Grünfeld to know that thoughtful play will ensure Black his full share of the chances.

Returning to the position after 6 cxd5 (D):



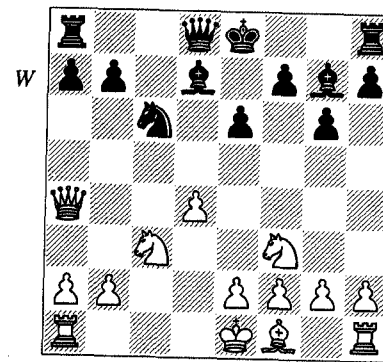
6...♘g5 7 ♘g5 e6

An important double attack on d5 and g5 which tends to ensure material equality. I have always been suspicious of the more aggressive lines like 7...e5, 7...c6 and 7...0-0 though all have been ventured by strong players.

8 ♘f3

This is the least threatening of White's eighth move possibilities.

a) 8 ♜a4+ is especially challenging and Black really has to be on his toes. 8...c6! (8...♙d7 9 ♜b3 ♜xg5 10 ♜xb7 0-0 11 ♜xa8 ♙xd4 12 e3 ♜e5 13 ♞c1 exd5 14 ♜b7 ♘c6 15 ♘e2! and now Burgess indicates 15...♙xb2!, e.g. 16 ♞xc6 ♙xc6 17 ♜xc6 d4, as not at all clear; while this is fertile ground for research, I don't trust the line for Black) 9 dxc6 ♘xc6 10 ♘f3 ♙d7! (D) and then:

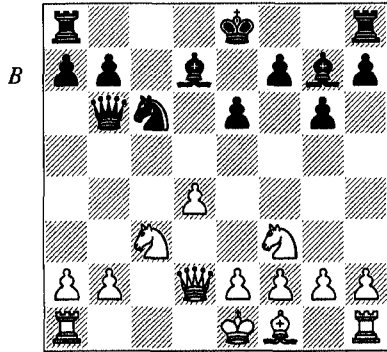


a1) 11 0-0-0?! is probably too ambitious if Black is energetic enough: 11...b5! (not 11...0-0 12 e3 b5 13 ♙xb5) 12 ♘xb5 (this seems forced, for example 12 ♜c2 ♞c8 or 12 ♜b3 ♘a5 13 ♜b4 ♙f8! trapping the queen) 12...0-0 13 ♜a3 ♜b8! (not 13...♜b6

because then a later c3-a4 would gain important time for White) 14 e3 c8 15 c3 a5 gave Black excellent counterplay in Cebalo-Lalić, Zagreb 1993.

a2) 11 d1 b6 12 b3 xd4 13 xb6 xf3+ is also fine for Black.

a3) 11 d1 ! is a very good test of Black's resources. 11... b6 12 d2 (D) obliges Black to capture the d-pawn:



a31) Hartston (1970) suggests (by transposition) that 12...0-0 leaves Black with good play for the pawn, citing Blagidze-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1959, which continued 13 e3 e5 14 d5 d4 ! "with a fine game for Black". Initially, I found this very encouraging because Black could do with some new(!) ideas against 8 a4+ . I haven't been able to find this game in any of my sources, but I would like to know if Black has a convincing continuation after 15 e2 , because your author hasn't found one.

a32) 12... xd4 13 0-0-0 xc3 14 xd7+ f8 15 d6+ g7 16 bxc3 hd8 17 a3 xd1+ 18 xd1 b1+

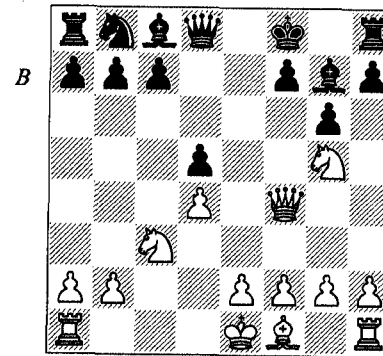
19 c1 d8+ 20 d2 xa2 is an attempt to go down fighting, which I was hoping would be playable, but clearly there's not enough compensation.

a33) 12... xd4 13 0-0-0 d8 ! (13...0-0-0 14 xd4 c6 15 e3 e5 16 xc6 xd2 17 e7+ d7 18 xd2+ xe7 19 d5+) 14 xd4 c6 15 e3 e5 16 e1 exd4 17 exd4+ f8 18 d5 xd5 ! (if you are desperate to play for a win, 18... d7 gives some dark-square compensation for the pawn) 19 xd5 xd5 20 e7+ ! (20 xd5 xb2+ 21 d1 b1+ 22 e2 b5+ wins for Black) 20... xe7 21 xd5+ d6 22 xb6 axb6 1/2-1/2 Shirov-Østenstad, Gausdal 1991.

You may well find that last line extremely baffling and it is also disappointing that such a dazzling flurry fizzles out to a draw. Though analysis does suggest that this was best play after 11 d1 it is dissatisfying to feel that a move like 8 a4+ can 'kill' the game in this way. I have never liked having 'dead draws' anywhere in my black repertoire mainly because I don't accept that Black should necessarily content himself with a draw. I just don't think we know enough about chess to have reached that conclusion yet. Of course 'living draws' are another matter and if you can find an equal position with just a little bit of tension there is still a chance of outwitting your opponent. If you are up against a weaker opponent who bangs out the theory to reach this position I can only suggest that you play on from the final position. You still have about

thirteen units as well as your active king and there are many pawns to be won.

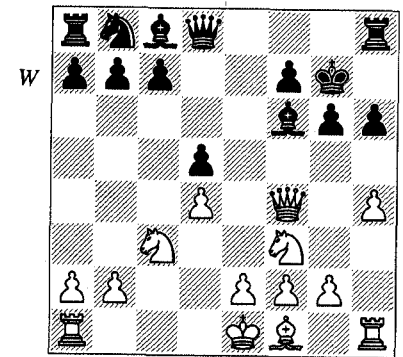
b) 8 d2 is also dangerous and the theory of this line is currently moving quite rapidly. I don't like the unaesthetic 8... h6 9 f4 for either side and it seems that 8... h6 9 h3 exd5 10 e3+ , to be followed by d4 , is probably not an improvement on the main lines. Therefore I am recommending 8... exd5 , which normally leads to a sharp position after 9 e3+ f8 10 f4 (D), when the stakes are already extremely high.



b1) For a while it was thought that 10... f6 was the answer to White's early aggression but now it seems that 11 xc7 a6 12 g3 b4 13 c1 ! is probably better for White, for example 13... f5 14 e3 c2+ ?! 15 xc2 ! xc2 16 xd5 c6 17 b4 a4 18 d6+ g8 19 c4 with a winning position for White, Peng Zhaoqin-Arakhmia, Groningen wom Ct 1997.

b2) So I recommend that Black returns to the older 10... f6 , which seems

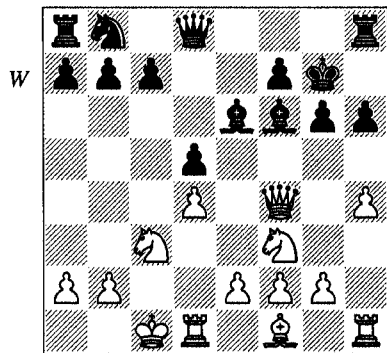
to be fully adequate in any case. After 11 h4 , 11... h6 12 f3 (in passing, I should mention that 12 xd5 has been tried here, but I don't think it's sound: 12... xg5 13 e5 h7 14 hxg5 c6 15 e4 f5 16 f3 xd4 17 a3+ g7 18 e3 hxg5 !?) (18... xg5 !?) 19 hxh7+ xh7 20 0-0-0 f6 21 c3 c5 22 xf5 xf5 23 e3 c6 gave Black a clear advantage in Skembris-Smejkal, Thessaloniki OL 1988) 12... g7 (D) feels to me like the best way to begin development because the king definitely belongs on g7, the knight is much less threatening on f3 and at this stage it is unclear where the other black pieces should go. Indeed, the main danger for Black is an early e4 so he should be wary of spending precious time on luxuries like ... c6 unless he can be confident that the position is sufficiently stabilized.



In the following variations there are a number of transpositions but I draw your attention particularly to White's plans of e4 and g4 and Black's plan of ... c5 and the manoeuvre ... d8-b8 .

b21) 13 e3 ♘e6 14 ♙d3 seems unthreatening but Black should be attentive since 14...c6?! 15 ♖g3! to be followed by ♜e2-f4 looks annoying. I think Black should play the flexible 14...♞d7 and now the time-consuming 15 ♖g3 is met by 15...c5! since White's queen no longer controls d4, while 15 0-0 gives Black time for 15...c6 16 ♖g3 ♖b8!. This idea of ...♖b8 is a crucial defensive idea in many lines. Note that Black's trump-card is the two bishops, which can only be used safely when the king is secure. Of course the black king feels much more secure with the queens off.

b22) 13 0-0-0 ♙e6! (D) has been played and suggested by the Russian grandmaster Epishin.



b221) The main idea is that after 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♜xe4 Black can safely play 15...♙xa2! as after the thematic 16 g4 ♜d7 17 ♙d3 there is 17...c5!!. It's very important that Black has this move since White's forces were beginning to loom large on the kingside and this is the only move which

highlights the fact that White's king is also by no means fortified. The following line is indicative of Black's initiative: 18 ♙b5 ♙d5! 19 dxc5 ♙xe4 20 ♞xd7 (20 ♖xe4 ♜xc5) 20...♖a5 21 ♖xe4 (21 ♞xf7+? ♜xf7 22 ♜e5+ ♜e7!) 21...♖xb5 22 ♞xb7 ♖xc5+ 23 ♜b1. Black now has a slight advantage – superior minor piece and safer king.

b222) 14 e3 and now:

b221) The immediate 14...c5 appears to lead to a draw after 15 dxc5 ♖a5 16 ♜d4 ♖xc5 17 ♙d3 ♜c6 18 ♜xe6+ fxe6 19 ♖g4 ♙xc3 with a perpetual. Note that White cannot escape here with 20 ♖xg6+ ♜f8 21 bxc3 ♖xc3+ 22 ♜b1 ♖b4+ 23 ♜c2 due to 23...♜d4+! 24 exd4 ♞c8+.

It is generally thought that the side with the two bishops should open the position to their benefit but not everyone remembers the fine-print which suggests that one should do so very gradually. The rationale is that to acquire the two bishops one often has to lose some time and it is unwise to open the position before you are fully developed. Of course from a theoretical perspective this sharp line is quite satisfactory, but I liked Black's set-up before the fireworks and I even prefer to be Black in such positions because it is easy for White to run out of steam whereas Black always has the two bishops as a long-term asset and knowing this often causes White to overpress at an early stage.

b222) 14...♜d7! is a very solid approach, and I think it is preferable. 15 g4 (don't panic – Black has lots of

good defenders on the kingside and White finds it difficult to dent Black's position due to the absence of his dark-squared bishop) 15...♙e7! and here:

b2221) 16 ♖g3 (if this is necessary then we are definitely on the right track). After 16...♙d6 17 ♖g2 c6 I slightly prefer Black. A good follow-up would involve trying to highlight the absence of White's dark-squared bishop with ...♖e7 and pushing the a-pawn towards a3.

b2222) ECO claims that Chandler suggests 16 e4!?, which is certainly more threatening but I can't help but feel that Black is very solid here while White has a very draughty position and a significant bishop deficit. 16...♜f6!? looks like one of many good replies.

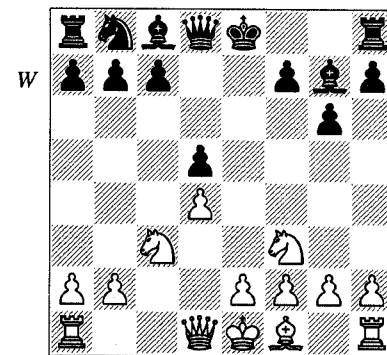
b223) 14 g4 c5!. Here it's slightly different because Black is meeting a flank attack with a counter on the centre. It is also possible to play more solidly but this active approach seems to ensure a good position for Black, and White cannot cop out with a forced draw! A possible continuation is 15 e3 ♜c6 16 ♙d3 cxd4 17 exd4 ♖b8!.

8...exd5 (D)

9 e3

The immediate 9 b4 runs into the disruptive 9...♖d6!, for example 10 a3 (10 ♖b3 ♜c6!; 10 ♖b1 ♙f5!) 10...0-0 (10...a5!?) 11 e3 c6 12 ♙e2 ♙f5 13 0-0 ♜d7 14 ♜a4 a5 15 ♖b3 b5 16 ♜c5 a4 17 ♖c3 ♜b6!. This instructive sequence comes from the game Seirawan-Kasparov, Dubai OL 1986 where Black equalized comfortably but later over-pressed and lost.

9...0-0



It is largely a matter of taste whether or not to prevent an early b4 with ...a5. Since opening the centre would be playing into the hands of Black's two bishops, it seems fair to say that the queenside minority attack is White's only long-term plan. We have seen that playing b4 a move earlier suffers from some tactical problems so we could also say that preventing it now effectively puts a strategic strait-jacket on White, who would be without his main plan, and we would therefore have completely de-fanged White's system. Of course it is not that easy because White can usually find a way to play b4 eventually, usually with the aid of ♜e1-d3. For this reason, there is a lot to be said for allowing an early b4 with the aim of quickly exploiting the weakness on c4. Perhaps your choice should depend on the temperament of you and your opponent; some players may foam at the mouth and lose the plot if you strive to prevent b4, others may get carried away on the queenside and get mated if you simply let him get on with it. I have included more

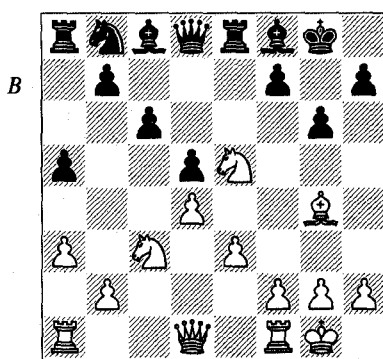
examples than normal to help you get a feel for these positions and make up your own mind.

9...a5 10 ♖e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♜e8 12 a3 ♙f8! shows the alternative plan, and now:

a) 13 ♘e1 c6 14 ♘d3 ♙d6 15 b4?! (once again White weakens c4 prematurely; a little more patience would keep the position approximately equal, e.g. 15 ♘a4!? ♙f5 16 ♙g4!?) 15...♞e7 16 ♞b3 b5!? 17 ♞fe1 (this is a little aimless; to understand these positions it is important to be as objective as possible so we should look at some alternatives; 17 ♘c5 doesn't change much compared to the game but since White should know that Black wants to put his knight on c4 he should find a way of discouraging this; after 17 ♞fc1!?, 17...♘d7 18 ♘d1!? and 17...♙f5 18 bxa5 ♞xa5 19 ♘b4 are lines showing that White does not have to play so as always to allow thematic black victories in this line!) 17...♙f5 18 ♘c5 ♘d7 19 ♙f1 ♘b6 20 bxa5?! ♘c4 21 a4 b4! 22 ♙xc4 bxc3 23 ♙f1 (23 ♙d3 ♙xc5 24 ♙xf5 ♙xd4!) 23...♙xc5 24 dxc5 ♞xc5 gave Black a winning advantage in Kakageldiev-I.Gurevich, Biel IZ 1993.

b) 13 ♘e5!? c6 14 ♙g4 (D).

GM Keith Arkell once told me that the exchange of light-squared bishops in such positions tends to favour White. I think the idea is that if Black is left with just two minor pieces to attack the kingside then the threats can be adequately dealt with, whereas it is difficult for Black to prevent a weakness on the queenside in the long term.



There is also less danger to White if the position opens up at any stage because Black has only one bishop. Although this is sound reasoning, it is also true that exchanging these bishops further weakens the c4-square and so perhaps it depends on whether Black can safely occupy this square before White effectively mobilizes the minority attack. In this given example we see that White's queenside turned out to be too weak but nonetheless I think that Keith's observation is a good rule of thumb which is at least partly supported by the extravagant lengths that world-class GM Vaganian went to exchange these bishops in this game.

In this particular case I suppose White simply lost too much time in the process but perhaps this suggests why Black rarely plays ...♙g4 when the knight is on f3. It is clever to try to provoke the weakening h3 before putting the bishop on, say, f5, but if White just plays ♘e1 at some stage then Black is effectively obliged to exchange these bishops and, it seems to me, this

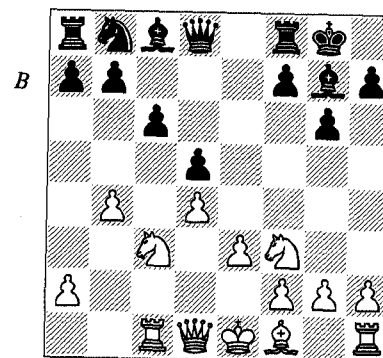
generally favours White. 14...♙d6 15 ♙xc8 ♞xc8 16 ♘d3 ♘d7 17 ♞f3 ♞d8 18 b4?! ♘b6 19 ♘c5 ♞c7 20 h3 ♘c4 gave Black the advantage in Vaganian-Wolff, New York 1990; White lost too much time exchanging bishops and then weakened c4 prematurely.

10 b4 c6 11 ♞c1 (D)

This may look a little automatic, but it is actually a fairly concrete move, which aims to threaten b5 without allowing ...c5 as a response.

11 ♙e2 ♙e6 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♘e1 a6 14 ♘d3 ♞e7 was the beginning of the game Ward-Shashikiran, British Ch (Torquay) 1998. It seems that Black was very familiar with our stem game since he played quickly and confidently and landed a similarly decisive sacrifice on e3. 15 ♞b3 (since 15 ♘c5!? ♘b6 16 ♘3a4 ♘c4 17 ♙xc4 dxc4 18 ♘b6 ♞ad8 19 ♞c1 seems to win the c4-pawn I presume the idea is 15...♘c5 16 bxc5 ♞ae8 to be followed by ...♙c8 if necessary; although we have a classic case of 'one unit holding up two' on the queenside {c5 vs c6 and b7} it will be almost impossible for White to break through there and in the meantime all of Black's pieces are performing important roles and there is a clear plan involving ...f5-f4 which will begin to undermine White's pawn-chain and create threats on the kingside) 15...♘b6 16 a4 (16 ♘c5!?) 16...♘c4 17 ♞a2 ♙f5 18 ♘h1 ♞fe8 19 a5!? (note that this way of fixing the queenside is only a problem for Black if White can effectively use the b6- and c5-squares and then eventually open the centre; as it is, Black has a

strong initiative in the centre and the kingside and so White could have used this move to better effect) 19...♞g5 20 ♘c5? (much too ambitious; 20 ♘d1 intending ♘3b2 was passive but preferable) 20...♘xe3! 21 fxe3 ♞xe3 22 ♞d2 ♞h4 23 ♞fd1 ♙h6 24 ♙f1 ♙f4 25 g3 ♞xg3 26 ♞b2 ♙g4 27 ♞d3 ♞f3 28 ♞g2 ♞f2 and the former British Champion now had to resign.



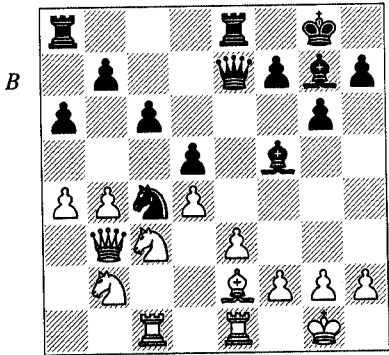
11...a6!?

The disadvantage of 11 ♞c1 is that now after a4 and ...b5 Black can take with the a-pawn and seize the open a-file.

12 ♙e2 ♞e7 13 ♞b3 ♙e6 14 0-0 ♘d7 15 a4 ♞fe8 16 ♘e1

16 a5!?, cutting out the knight's route to c4, is a reasonable idea and may be a good way of giving Black a guilt trip over putting 'the wrong rook' on e8. Probably it wasn't the wrong rook in general since on a8 the rook discouraged White's main idea of playing b5 but now Black's best move here is probably 16...♞f8! and then ...♞ae8 and ...f5.

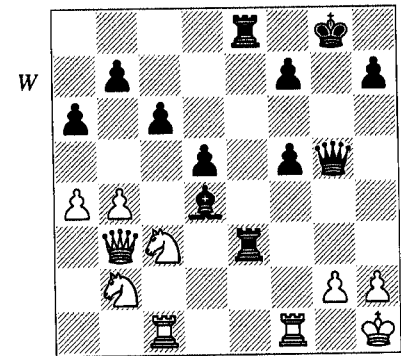
16...♖b6 17 ♘d3 ♘c4 18 ♜fe1
♙f5 19 ♘b2 (D)



Begging for it.
19...♖xe3! 20 ♙d3 ♚g5 21 fxe3
♜xe3

Only two pawns at the moment, but d4 is terminally weak and White's king-side is lacking defenders.

22 ♙xf5 ♙xd4 23 ♚h1 ♜ae8! 24
♜f1
24 ♜xe3 ♚xe3.
24...gxf5 (D)



25 g3 ♚g4 0-1

White was probably despairing at the lack of an answer to all of Black's threats when he realized that ...♜xg3 was also a threat and decided to stop the clocks.

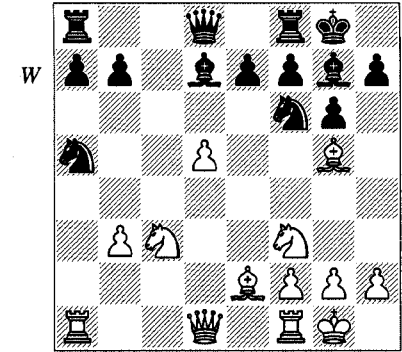
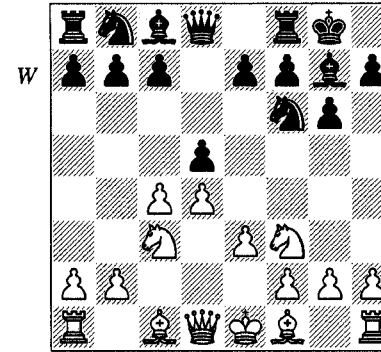
Carl's bad in the Quiet System

Game 30
Gligorić – Botvinnik
Moscow Chigorin mem 1947

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♘f3

White can also enter the quiet system with 4 e3, which allows for the distinctive 4...♙g7 5 ♚b3 e6 6 ♚a3!? attempting to stop Black castling. In my opinion this approach is underestimated and Black now has to play very carefully to gain his full share of the chances. 6...♘c6 (6...♚e7?! would give White a clear advantage after 7 ♚xe7+ ♚xe7 8 cxd5 exd5 9 b3!, when not only does White have the central predominance of pawns, but Black has trouble coordinating) 7 ♘f3 ♘e7! appears to be the best first step. A logical continuation is then 8 ♙e2 0-0 9 0-0 b6 10 ♙d2 ♙b7 11 ♜fd1 ♘e4, when Black can enter the middlegame with confidence. However, I recommend taking a thorough look at this line generally because although White's set-up is rather tame, it is very difficult to achieve active play for Black and there is a delicate balance to be struck between manoeuvring patiently and striking at the centre when expedient.

4...♙g7 5 e3 0-0 (D)



This is the starting position for the main line of the quiet system. White has many options at this stage and in each case I will give only a taster of how Black should react since good opening moves will come naturally as your general understanding of the opening increases. There also seems to be little point in memorizing a lot of moves in a relatively non-theoretical position.

Remember, you must challenge White's centre:

6 ♚b3

Or:

a) 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 ♙c4 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 c5 9 0-0 ♚c7! 10 ♚e2 b6!?.

b) 6 ♙e2 c5! 7 0-0 (after 7 dxc5 dxc4! 8 ♚xd8 ♜xd8 9 ♙xc4 ♘bd7 10 c6 bxc6, despite the structure it is Black who is better here since he can use the new-found open lines to attack the white queenside) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 ♘c6 and now the most critical is 9 ♙g5!? dxc4 10 d5 ♘a5 11 b4 cxb3 12 axb3 ♙d7! (D) (an important tactic to preserve the knight) 13 b4 ♜c8.

c) 6 ♙d2 c5! 7 dxc5 ♘a6 8 cxd5 ♘xc5 9 ♙c4 a6! 10 a4 (it's good to

force the weakening on b3 since combined with the weakness on d3 the bishop is virtually forced to stay on c4 where it is tactically vulnerable once Black plays ...♜c8) 10...♙f5 11 0-0 ♜c8 12 ♚e2 ♘fe4 with more than enough play for the pawn.

d) 6 b4 b6! 7 ♚b3 c5! 8 bxc5 bxc5 9 cxd5 ♘a6 10 ♙e2 ♜b8 11 ♚a4 ♘b4 12 0-0 ♘fxd5 and again Black has a good position.

Notice that the quiet system is best met by extremely energetic measures; Black should be willing to sacrifice a pawn to break up the centre and then use the activity gained to win the material back while maintaining the initiative. It is also possible to play more compliantly with ...c6 or ...e6 but then you are accepting that White has superior central control, and there is no need to; it is much more annoying for White to hit the centre immediately. Remember if your opponent plays these lines he probably wants a quiet life, so it's best to make as much noise as possible!

6...e6

OK, it's hardly a ghetto-blast of a move but in this particular line it is forced. The good news for Black is that the queen has had to misplace itself to cause this sober move and Black still has good chances of hitting the centre with ...b6 and ...c5.

7 ♙d2 b6 8 ♜c1 ♙b7

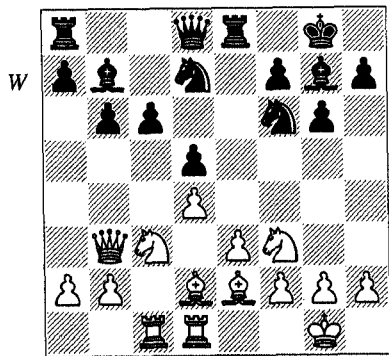
8...c5!? – Boleslavsky.

9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♙e2 c6

A very solid move. Botvinnik had probably studied these middlegames in detail and simply wants to reach a position he understands.

Note, however, that with this aim in mind 10... ♞bd7 ?! is inaccurate due to 11 ♞b5 !? c6 (11...c5!?) 12 ♞d6 .

11 0-0 ♞bd7 12 ♜fd1 ♞e8 (D)



So here we are, Botvinnik has been caught red-handed drinking a pint of Carlsberg.

Indeed, there is no denying that we have all the classic symptoms; Black has ideas of ...c5, ... ♞e4 and possibly ... ♙f8-d6 while White is solidly placed and fully prepared for any of Mikhail's notorious drunken banter. The position

is actually about equal but I always prefer to play Black in such positions as White's pieces are somewhat claustrophobic. Indeed their lack of breath is causing them to gasp and stumble on each other's toes while Black's bishops look positively serene and are ideally poised for the ...c6-c5 break, after which they will both be perfectly directed towards the centre. It is interesting to see how the drunken Botvinnik manoeuvres since clearly it was important for him to have all his pieces fully ready for this break; in particular he wanted to remove his queen from the line of the white rook on d1.

13 ♙e1

White is playing with great retention but bear in mind that he is now fully ready for ♞c2 and b4 with queen-side play so Black should take precautions. It is well worth noting that Botvinnik did not hurry with ... ♞e4 since White would certainly have taken on e4 before Black could play ...f5 (to take back with the f-pawn) and this would certainly ease White's position much more than Black's, e.g. 13... ♞e4 ?! 14 ♞xe4 dxe4 15 ♞d2 ♞f6 16 ♞c4 ♞d5 17 ♞a5 !

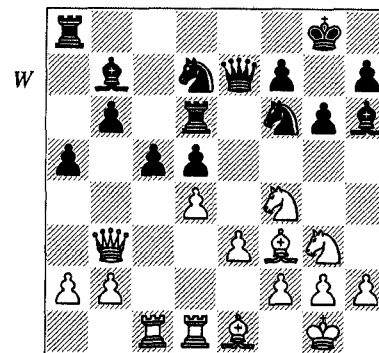
13... ♙f8 !?

I guess this is directed against the above-mentioned plan. If White now shuffled his king backwards and forwards Black would probably play ... ♙d6 , ... ♞e7 , ... ♜ad8 and then ...c5, so White strikes on the idea of playing e4 with ♞d2 and ♙f3 and Botvinnik plays to prevent this instead.

14 ♞d2 ♞e6 15 ♙f3 ♞e7 16 ♞e2 ♙h6 17 ♞f4 ♜d6 18 ♞f1 a5!

A healthy gain in space and the best way of preventing ♙b4 .

19 ♞g3 c5! (D)

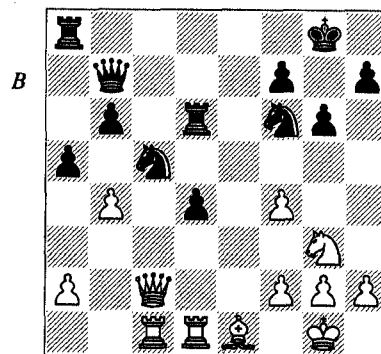


Good timing by Botvinnik, who has seen through his inebriation to a concrete slight advantage.

20 dxc5 ♞xc5 21 ♞c2 ♙xf4 ! 22 exf4 d4

The passed d-pawn is well supported by Black's centralized forces.

23 ♙xb7 ♞xb7 24 b4! (D)



A good defensive move, the fantastic knight on c5 has to be dislodged.

24... axb4 25 ♙xb4 ♜d5 26 ♞e2 ♞d7 27 f5 ♞e8 28 ♞f3 gxf5 !

Like a drunken man grabbing a penny, Botvinnik grabs a pawn.

29 ♞e2 h6!

Instructive – he wants to put the king on a light square where it's safer than it would be on h8.

30 ♞f4 ♜de5 31 h3 ♜c8 ?

I guess he just had one too many; this blunder completely spoils his previous efforts. Earlier in the evening I'm sure he would not have 'unprotected' his rook on e5.

31... ♙h7 looks like an improvement. Now the barman calls for last orders as the game is rushed towards a draw.

32 ♞g3+ ♙h7 33 ♞h5 ! ♞xh5 34 ♞xe5 ♞d3 35 ♜xd3 ♜xc1+ 36 ♙h2 ♜c4 37 ♙d6 ♞e6 38 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 39 ♞xd4 ♞xa2 40 ♞xb6 ♞e6 41 ♞d4 ♞f6 1/2-1/2

Conclusion

1) Other things being equal, the Carlsbad structure favours White, so Black has to play very purposefully to attain his full share of the chances.

2) In the ♞f3 , ♙g5 systems, Black should be very attentive to the timing and effectiveness of White's minority attack.

3) In the Quiet system Black should generally play as actively as possible but in the ♞b3 lines Black does well to combine patient manoeuvring and a timely ...c5 break.

12 The Eager Lady

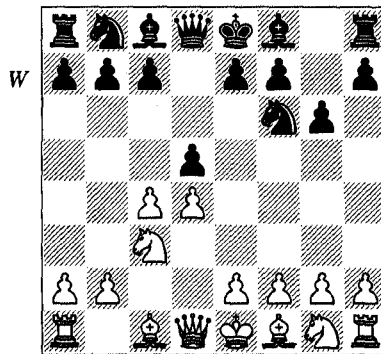
"Somewhere on this globe, every ten seconds, there is a woman giving birth to a child. She must be found and stopped." – Sam Stevenson

We will now turn our attention to one of White's most dangerous approaches which is a fundamental test of the Grünfeld in the sense that White quickly gains seemingly indisputable central control. It is not at all simple for Black to generate sufficient counterplay before White consolidates the position with a significant advantage in space. After an early ♖b3 the white queen often acts as an excellent guardian of the central squares and also makes way for a rook to come to d1, further bolstering the centre.

I always like to think of the following lines in terms of the white queen being informed of her army's predicament in the centre of the battlefield and then rushing to its service with great haste and determination. Indeed, although this line is generally called the Russian System due to its adoption by leading Russian players over several decades, I prefer to call it the Eager Lady Variation, for most variations revolve around the question of whether the queen's early adventures can be justified by Black's central counterplay being stifled or whether the lady was just a little too eager and will be pounced on by her enemies in the opposing side.

Game 31
I. Fargo – Djurić
Saint Vincent 1998

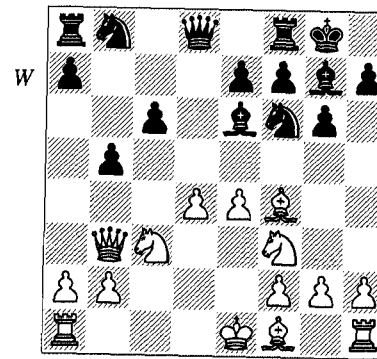
1 d4 g6 2 c4 ♟f6 3 ♚c3 d5 (D)



4 ♟f3

4 ♜b3!?. It is quite rare for the lady to display maximum eagerness in this manner and Black has no particular problems if he doesn't try too hard to punish her. 4...dxc4 5 ♜xc4 ♟g7! (some sources have recommended 5...♟e6! but I think White is at least no worse after this and so it seems unnecessary to kick up a fuss and get confused over a rarely played move-order) and now:
a) 6 ♟f4 c6 7 ♟f3 (7 ♟d1?! ♜a5 8 ♟d2 ♜b6 9 ♟c1 ♟f5 was slightly

better for Black in Euwe-Alekhine, The Hague Wch (4) 1935; note the way that Alekhine wrestled central control away from White by using his slight lead in development to create early threats to the white queen) 7...0-0 and now White now has nothing better than 8 e4, when 8...b5 9 ♜b3 (9 ♜d3 ♜a5! 10 ♟e2 b4 11 ♟d1 c5! is good for Black) 9...♟e6! (D) is Kasparov's recommendation.



Black's main idea here is to combine the moves ...♜a5, ...♟e6 and ...b5-b4 so as to prevent White from stabilizing the centre. It is important to get the move-order right in order to force the queen to c2 so as to have the threat of ...♜a5 and ...b4-b3 giving check and attacking the white queen. 9...♜a5 therefore seems inaccurate due to 10 ♟d3! ♟e6 11 ♜d1!, as in Miles-Kasparov, Basle (2) 1986.

b) 6 e4 0-0 7 ♟f4! ♟c6! is another of Svidler's key antidotes to Grünfeld sub-variations. Russian GM Yuri Yakovich is currently the main exponent of the 'Extremely Eager

Lady Variation' but in a game from St Petersburg 1993 he was placed under early pressure by Grünfeld expert Peter Svidler: 8 ♟d1 ♟d7! 9 ♟f3 ♟b6 10 ♜c5 ♟g4 11 d5 ♟xf3 12 gxf3 ♟e5 13 ♟e2 ♜d6! 14 ♜e3 f5!. Yakovich now began to play very well and the game was a draw, but Svidler's opening play makes a powerful impression.

To be fair to the lady, 8 ♟f3 would now be the main line which we will shortly consider.

As far as I am aware, Svidler has never played ...♟c6 in the main line and has always preferred the Hungarian line with an early ...a6. I think it is very likely that he had little theoretical knowledge of the intricacies of what would occur there if White had indeed transposed at this point. However, his understanding of the nature of the Grünfeld is so acute that I suspect that this wouldn't have worried him at all. He would simply have realized that he had to find a way to fight for the centre, have known the common themes and proceeded to play chess.

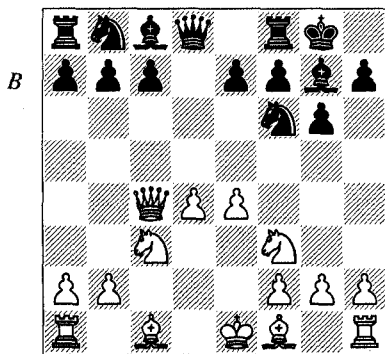
A final point: 8 d5 e5! is an important motif to be aware of in the Grünfeld, and after 9 ♟e3 ♟d4! 10 ♟xd4? exd4 11 ♜xd4 ♟xe4! 12 ♜xe4 ♟e8 White is losing. These tactical points are also prevalent in the King's Indian and are a vital source of counterplay for Black.

4...♟g7 5 ♜b3 dxc4!

It is better to open up lines to attack the centre and further expose the queen rather than holding on to the d5 point with 5...c6, which does not harmonize

well with the g7-bishop's designs on d4.

6 ♖xc4 0-0 7 e4 (D)



This is the starting point for what is commonly known as the Russian variation (for 7 ♗f4 c6! 8 e4, see note 'a' to White's 4th move above). White has spent two tempi with the queen in order to secure the centre and hold off an early ...c5 break. Black has numerous ways to fight for the centre, all of which have a logic of their own.

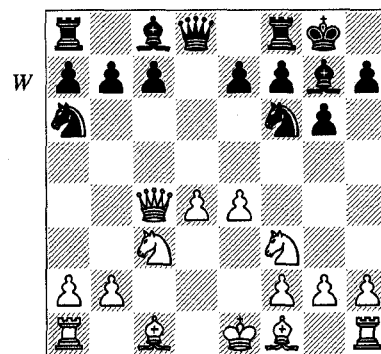
a) 7...a6!? has been popularized by several Hungarian players. The idea is to hit the queen with ...b5, thus removing it from control of c5 and often allowing Black to exercise the break ...c7-c5. Moreover, Black has the option of developing the bishop at b7 to attack e4. The slight drawback of the move is that Black gains time with pawns rather than pieces. Hence, although I was inspired by this move when it was recommended in *Winning With the Grünfeld* several years ago, to my mind it now seems rather counter-intuitive effectively to take two moves

to remove the white queen from a somewhat shaky post. Of course it is annoying that it restricts the ...c5 break on c4, but it is also vulnerable to ...♗f6-d7-b6, ...♗c6-a5 or sometimes ...♗c6-e5. Indeed, bearing in mind this last manoeuvre, it appears that if Black is given the choice of forcing d4-d5 or e4-e5 it would seem that it is generally better to do the former. Then Black has two serious pawn-breaks with ...c6 and ...e6 whereas after e4-e5 the bishop on g7 is restricted and the rather awkward ...f6 break often weakens the black king. Of course there is the small matter of the d5-square after White plays e5 but throughout this book we have seen that this is not always such a blessing for Black, and this is especially so if Black has weakened his queenside with ...b5.

Considering this, it makes more sense to me to attack d4 and provoke d5 than attack e4 and force e5. Furthermore, the ...c5 break is not necessarily the best way to attack the centre here because the eager lady has made way for a rook to go to d1 and in the event of an early ...c5 the black queen on d8 will often grudgingly have to move. I'm not saying that the Hungarian System is bad, but just that it doesn't make good sense to me.

b) 7...♗a6!? (D) is very respectable theoretically and was originally going to be my main recommendation.

However, I have little new to add to the established theory and in the time it took me to realize this, I also realized that Black really has to be armed



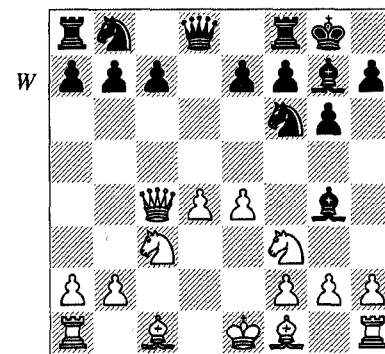
with copious amounts of theoretical knowledge because the resulting positions tend to be very sharp and not at all easy to understand conceptually. Of course the idea behind the move is to defy White's strategy and play a quick ...c5. In most cases White will play d4-d5 and after ...e6 Delroy will be armed and dangerous but potentially quite vulnerable. The a6-knight can be a very bad piece but can also be a useful blockader if it ever manages to reach d6 via e8. This knight can also spring to life via b4, or c5 if the white queen is somehow forced to move. If this move appeals to you more than my main recommendation, then I suggest that Lalić's recent coverage in *The Grünfeld for the Attacking Player* is an excellent place to start.

c) 7...c6!? is similar to 7...a6 but tends to signal that ...b5 will be supported with ...a5 rather than ...c5. It is perhaps the most passive of Black's seventh moves and unless the queenside play becomes ferocious very quickly it seems that there is insufficient pressure on the centre. Moreover,

after 8 ♖b3! I haven't seen a way for Black to equalize.

d) 7...♗fd7!? seems a little introspective, but it does overlap with my main recommendation and in the process of discarding it I discovered one important idea contained in a line given by Suetin: 8 ♗e3 ♗b6 9 ♖b3 ♗c6 10 d5 ♗e5 11 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12 0-0-0! c6!? with the idea that 13 dxc6 ♖c7 14 cxb7 ♗xb7 gives Black excellent counterplay for the sacrificed pawn. This is relevant to what follows and hopefully also a good example of not sticking so tightly to your main repertoire that you miss important ideas which are available for 'exporting'.

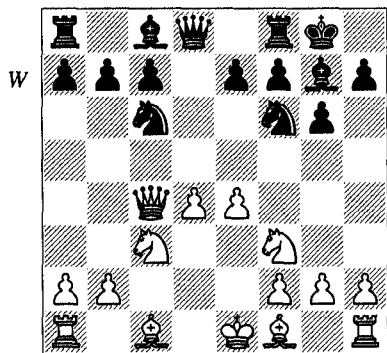
e) 7...♗g4!? (D) is the classical approach, endorsed by none less than Fischer, Smyslov and Kasparov.



Black simply develops a piece and undermines the main defender of White's d4 point. The pressure on this square is often increased by ...♗c6 or the manoeuvre ...♗f6-d7-b6, which has the added bonus of nudging away

the white queen. Such is the simple logic and obvious harmony of this approach that any author would have to have a very good reason for warning against it. In this case I suggest that 8 ♖e3 ♜fd7 9 0-0-0! is better for White. The main reason is that White's centre is secure and it remains difficult for Black to execute the breaks ...c5 or ...e5 due to the relation between the rook on d1 and the queen on d8. Moreover, the g4-bishop's *raison d'être* is to capture the prisoner on f3 but in the process (after ...♗xf3, gxf3) White is presented with attacking chances on the kingside and if Black pushes the queenside pawns to generate counterplay he will often create light-square weaknesses which can be 'inspected' by White's unopposed light-squared bishop. Most of these ideas are illustrated in the documented theory and they are sufficient for me to steer you in a different direction.

7...♝c6!? (D)



I whole-heartedly recommend this move, which I have come to believe to

be most in accordance with the demands of the position. As I've said, it makes some sense for Black to be focusing his efforts on encouraging White to play d4-d5 rather than e4-e5 and a good way to do so is to exert pressure on d4. Also, we have seen that the break ...c7-c5 is by no means the most logical approach to combat the eager lady and so temporarily blocking the c-pawn in this manner does little harm. Moreover, by keeping the bishop on c8 Black has kept g4 available to the f6-knight and so effectively prevents the idea of ♖e3 and 0-0-0, which can occur after ...♗g4. Plus, as well as retaining the option of ...♗g4, Black often prefers ...♜f6-d7-b6 followed by ...f5 or sometimes ...e5 (with the idea of meeting d5 with ...♞d4 if White doesn't have sufficient control of d4). So, my feeling is that since Black has to commit himself on move seven, this is the best way to commit yourself as flexibly as possible! Finally, Black develops a piece and immediately targets the centre without tinkering around the edges.

If my broad-brush reasoning doesn't convince you then I hope that the following variations will.

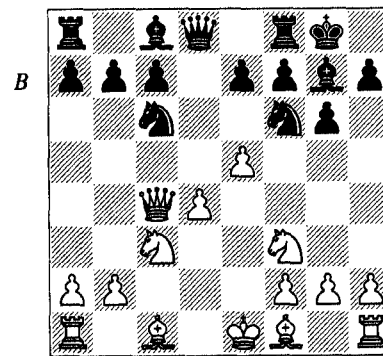
8 ♖e2

From a theoretical standpoint, this is definitely the critical test, but White has several alternatives of which Black ought to be aware:

a) 8 d5?! is the crudest attempt to gain an advantage. The following game not only shows that Black is fully OK but is also a model of why Black often has an edge in symmetrical Grünfeld

endgames when the bishop on g7 is 'scopeful' and White's d3-square is weak: 8...♞a5 9 ♖d3 c6 10 dxc6 (10 b4? ♜xe4!) 10...♜xc6 11 ♗xd8 ♞xd8 12 ♖e2 b6 13 0-0 ♖b7 14 ♖f4 ♜b4 15 a3?! ♞d3 16 ♖xd3 ♞xd3 17 ♞fe1 ♞d7 18 ♞ac1 ♞c5 19 ♞e2 ♞ad8 20 ♖e5 ♖h6 21 ♞b1 ♜xe4! 22 ♜xe4 ♞d1+ 23 ♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 24 ♞e1 ♖a6 25 ♞c3 ♞a1 and White resigned in Herndl-J.Horvath, Austrian Cht 1996/7 since 26 ♜f1 ♖d2 is beautifully decisive. Of course White's play was compliant to say the least but hopefully this is another example of my point that many Grünfeld endgames are only superficially equal.

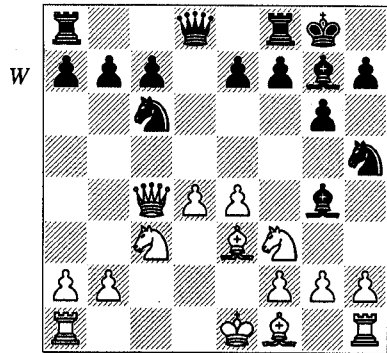
b) 8 e5!?! (D) is a much better move since it is more difficult to break down the white centre.



Still, Black has the ...c5 and ...f6 breaks in the long term and can immediately set about gaining firm control of the crucial d5 point: 8...♞d7 9 ♖e3 ♜b6 10 ♗c5 (10 ♗b3 ♖e6 11 ♗d1 ♖c4!?) 10...a5! (gaining space and indirectly seeking the d5-square) 11

♖e2 ♜b4 12 0-0 c6 13 ♞e4 ♖f5 14 ♜fd2 ♞6d5 15 ♜g3 ♖e6 16 a4 (this looks like an unforced error but Black threatened to take on e3 and a2 and White needs the a3-square for the rook) 16...♜xe3! (Black gives up an excellent knight for a passive bishop but also frees d5 for his 'superfluous' b4-knight and correctly assesses that the counterplay on e3 will be considerable; such an exchange is not always a good idea for Black, but here the timing is perfect) 17 fxe3 ♖h6! (remember me?) 18 ♞a3 ♞d5 19 ♞f3 ♖g4 20 ♞f2 ♜xe3! was better for Black in V.Milov-Ma.Tseitlin, Tel-Aviv 1994. Although both sides played fairly sensibly, it is important to know that White's moves were by no means forced and so it would be unwise to write off the early e5 as a mistake. It does seem that Black is under no immediate pressure and can count on a promising middlegame, but blocking out the pressure on d4 when there is no imminent ...c5 break makes good sense for White and I advise black players to be wary of writing off a line just because it has yet to pose theoretical problems.

c) 8 ♖f4 has been played at least twice by renowned theoretician Grandmaster M.Gurevich. Again I think Black is fully OK but the position is not without dangers for Black by any means. 8...♞h5! (attacking d4 with gain of time, but now White can place his bishop where he originally would have liked to) 9 ♖e3 ♖g4! (consistently knocking on d4's door) and now (D):



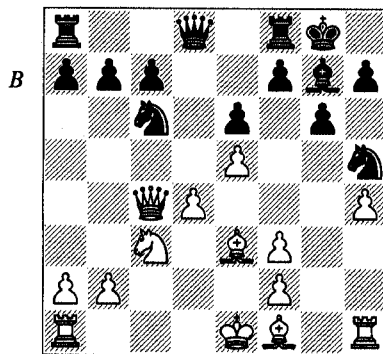
c1) 10 d5 ♖a5 (not 10...♙xf3? 11 dxc6) followed by ...c6 is fine for Black. Note the general rule that when White has not played ♙e2 Black is ill-advised to try to take on f3 followed by ...♗e5.

c2) 10 0-0-0! ♙xf3 (the most thematic move in that Black seizes lots of dark squares, but if you enjoy complications you might consider 10...e5 11 d5 ♗d4 12 ♗xd4 ♙xd1 13 ♗db5 ♙g4 14 h3 ♙d7 15 ♗xc7 ♜c8 16 d6 ♙c6 17 ♙c5 ♗f6, which was unclear in Nogueiras-Olafsson, Wijk aan Zee 1987) 11 gxf3 e5 12 d5 (12 dxe5 ♗h4! 13 e6 ♗e5 14 exf7+ ♜xf7 15 ♗b3 c6 should be fairly familiar to you by now; Black has good chances due to his grip on e5 and f4) 12...♗d4 13 f4! (White must try to shake Black's grip) 13...♗f3 (13...♗h4!? 14 fxe5 {14 f5 c6} 14...♗f3 appears promising for Black) 14 f5 ♗h4 (14...♗d4!? 15 f4 ♙h6 is extremely cheeky but looks rather strong) 15 hxg6 fxg6 16 ♗xc7 ♜fc8 17 ♗xb7 ♜ab8 18 ♗xa7 ♜a8 19 ♗b7 led to perpetual teasing of the eager lady in Lebrede-Jansa, Hradec

Kralove 1981. She had to stay by the side of the cornered rook so that ...♗xe4 could be answered by ♗xa8 or ♗xb8. However, there is ample opportunity for Black to vary and it is worth acquainting yourself with my suggested alternatives.

c3) 10 ♜d1?! ♙xf3 11 gxf3 e5, etc.

c4) 10 e5!? was described by M.Gurevich as "an ambitious attempt to take advantage of the placement of the knight on h5". 10...♙xf3 11 gxf3 e6 12 h4 (D).



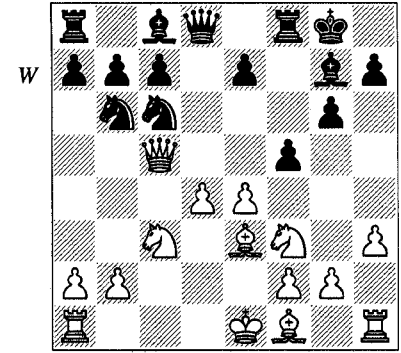
Note that it is imperative to stop Black playing ...♗h4 as then Black's pieces would be optimally placed and the knight on h5 would be comfortably over-protected.

c41) 12...♗e7!? was now played in Gurevich-Zagorskis, Bonn 1996. Black's idea is to play ...♗b4 so as to exchange queens and hence be somewhat relieved of the cramped nature of the position. Black equalized and drew but only after making several difficult decisions thereafter. I wonder if it's not possible to be more ambitious

as Black because, apart from the vulnerable nature of the knight on h5, there is not much wrong with the black position. Indeed, the knights generally have better prospects than bishops in such semi-blocked positions and White's structure is vulnerable in the long term.

c42) 12...♗e7!? looks like a reasonable attempt to improve since, given time to play ...c6 and ...♗d5, Black will have excellent prospects whereas White doesn't seem to have anything immediate. Note that playing ...♗d5 before ...c6 is rarely a good idea in such structures since White should capture on d5 and the change in structure tends to favour White due to the prospects of opening the black king-side with the white f-pawns. 13 ♙e2 ♗f5 14 f4 ♗hg3! is better for Black, while 13 ♙h3 ♗f5 14 ♙xf5 gxf5 doesn't seem to offer any particular knock-out to compensate for White's long-term positional problems; the pawns on d4 and h4 are both weak and Black's f-pawns are actually 'better' than White's in that one of them controls an important central square while the other offers a useful pawn-break.

d) 8 h3, preventing ...♙g4, is rather coy and unthreatening but again Black has to play energetically and hit the centre before White fully mobilizes. 8...♗d7!? is a good reply because Black can now play a plan involving a quick ...f5, which renders h3 somewhat irrelevant. 9 ♙e3 ♗b6 10 ♗c5 (10 ♗d3 f5! is already favourable to Black due to the annoying idea of ...♗b4) 10...f5! (D) and then:



d1) 11 e5 is met by 11...f4!. Note that this tends to be a good idea only when it interferes with White's natural piece placement; otherwise it just gifts White the e4-square. 12 ♙d2 a5! (gaining space and creating the possibility of ...♗b4) 13 ♙d3?! ♗d7!. This last move is a tactical shot rather than a positional manoeuvre and White now had big problems due to his loose bishop on d3 in Zakharov-Ghinda, Pernik 1982.

d2) 11 ♜d1 fxe4! (11...f4? 12 ♙c1 would now be no inconvenience to White and is simply anti-positional because it relieves the pressure on White's centre) 12 ♗e5! (watch out for this sort of thing – it is a symptom of White's early queen sortie that the black queen is distantly confronted by a white rook on d1; 12 ♗xe4 ♙e6 gives Black an ideal position for this line; a lead in development, active pieces and pressure on the centre) 12...♗d6 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♗xe4 ♗e6! (more ambitious than 14...♗d5 but I think Black is solid enough to get away with the following pawn-grab)

15 ♔d3 ♖xa2 16 0-0 ♗e6 17 ♝c1 ♔d7 18 ♗c2 ♙e8 19 ♘c5 ♗d6 20 ♙e4 ♘d5 was the continuation of Suba-Ghinda, Bucharest 1981. I think Black is slightly better now although earlier improvements for White are not inconceivable.

e) 8 ♙e3 ♘g4! is one of the main points of Black's move-order but again I advise against complacency here since Black has to follow up accurately to gain the advantage to which it is thought he is now theoretically entitled. 9 0-0-0 ♘xe3 10 fxe3 e5! is actually given as unclear in *ECO* but this seems a little unkind to Black in my opinion since White's centre is very shaky and there is no desirable way to relieve the tension. (Note that instead 10...♙h6?! 11 d5 ♙xe3+ 12 ♖b1 gives White a dangerous initiative and is an example of the dangers present in thinking that the position will play itself.)

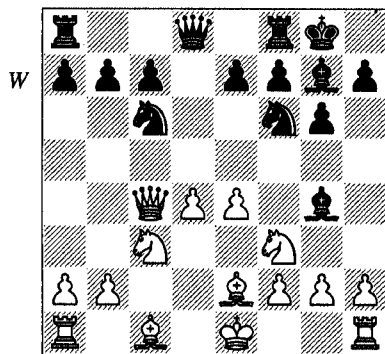
f) 8 ♙g5!? is almost unknown but appears to be a reasonable try for White. 8...h6!? (8...♙g4!? 9 d5 ♘a5 also looks reasonable) suggests itself, so as to encourage the bishop to lose touch with the queenside. 9 ♙h4 (9 ♙xf6!?) 9...♙g4 10 d5 ♘a5 11 ♗b4 ♙xf3 12 gxf3 b6 (12...c6!?) 13 ♙b5 a6 14 ♙a4 ♗d6! gave Black good middlegame chances in Guseinov-Zagorskis, Pardubice 1995. We have already seen this queen confrontation in Yakovich-Svidler above, and indeed it is often the most effective way to deal with the eager lady; Black effectively says: "Pick on someone your own size!" If White captures on d6,

Black recaptures with the c-pawn, when Black's pieces are well placed for an attack on the white queenside.

8...♘d7!?

At this point I am recommending two continuations for Black. This is often a sign that the author is somehow uncomfortable with a given recommendation but here I genuinely think that both approaches are acceptable. I have discovered important resources for Black in both lines and yet I know that I am not omniscient and suspect that the ♗b3 line will remain a popular choice for White regardless of a good move here, or a novelty there. Hence I think it is important to have as deep an awareness of Black's resources as you possibly can.

My alternative suggestion is 8...♙g4 (*D*), which, if it came to the crunch, I guess I would recommend ahead of 8...♘d7 at this point in time.



To be honest, this is just your author writing under the protection of his chequered security blanket. The move has a surer footing theoretically and

leads to positions which have been played and analysed deeply for both sides by strong GMs. However, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to broaden your horizons and truly hope that you will make up your own mind having looked at both lines.

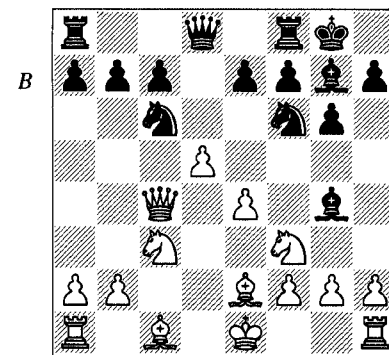
a) 9 ♙e3 was the choice of no less a player than Karpov in the first game of his match with Kamsky in Elista 1996. It seems to my mind, however, that by allowing Black to carry on the crusade against d4 White has much less chance of causing problems than in the lines we are about to consider in 'b'. 9...♙xf3 and now:

a1) 10 gxf3 e5! 11 dxe5 (11 d5 ♘d4 already looks better for Black) 11...♘xe5 12 ♗d4!? (in such structures White's main problem tends to be the safety of his king and so it is a good idea to exchange the queens) 12...♗xd4 13 ♙xd4 ♘c6! 14 ♙e3 ♝fd8 gives Black a very comfortable endgame but it was also possible to decline the exchange of queens with a double-edged middlegame instead.

a2) 10 ♙xf3 e5 11 d5 ♘d4 12 ♙d1 follows the aforementioned match-game. Kamsky played 12...b5!? and although after 13 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 he was not yet worse, he went on to lose due to the weakness of his light squares. I suspect Black can seek to punish White for the time lost in keeping the bishop-pair and the central space advantage. Both 12...c6 and 12...♘e8 are promising in this respect but I think the strongest move in this position is the subtle 12...a6!?, as originally suggested by Krogus. It seems to me that

White cannot adequately stop Black's plan of now playing ...b5 and ...c5, after which Black's fantastic knight and mobile queenside will be the most important factors in the position. 13 0-0 (13 a4 b5! doesn't help) 13...b5 14 ♗d3 (14 ♗c5? ♝e8! and ...♙f8) 14...c5! is the most obvious follow-up and now it is not at all clear how White should combat Black's play. 15 dxc6?? ♘f3+ is certainly not the way but nor is 15 a4 c4 16 ♗d2 b4 17 ♘a2 ♘xe4 18 ♗xb4 ♗xd5, so it seems to me that Black will be given time to bring his knight from f6 to c5 or d6, which will lead to an exceedingly comfortable middlegame.

b) 9 d5 (*D*) is critical:

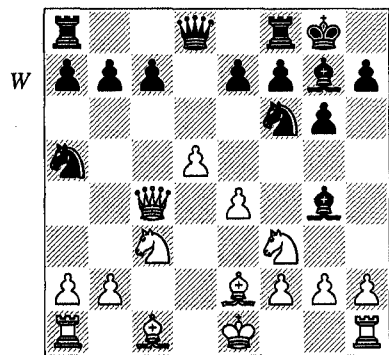


b1) 9...♙xf3 is not the best response. As far as I can tell, after 10 gxf3! Black has no good way to equalize because this early capture gives White important information to help him decide where to put his queen. For example:

b11) 10...♘e5 11 ♗b3! controls d5 and pressurizes b7.

b12) 10...♘a5 11 ♖d3! is now a good square because 11...c6 12 b4 wins for White.

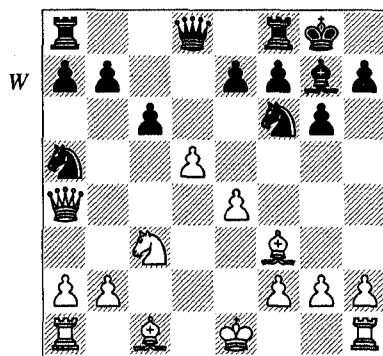
b2) I thus recommend 9...♘a5! (D), which gives White a choice of three moves:



b21) 10 ♖d3!? c6! seems to equalize immediately but the position is still very complex strategically and Black has to play the next few moves very actively to keep the balance. 11 h3 (spending an important tempo on making Black execute the capture he set out to play, but there is no obviously good alternative; for example 11 b4? cxd5 12 bxa5 ♗xe4! is in Black's favour) 11...♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 (12 ♗xf3?! cxd5 13 exd5 ♗c6! completely solves Black's problems and makes Delroy much more of a weakness than a strength) 12...cxd5 13 exd5 a6 14 0-0 b5 15 ♗d1 ♗b7 16 ♗e3 follows Bronstein-I.Sokolov, Pančevo 1987. Now 16...♗d6 17 ♖f4 ♗b8! would have left White's bishops somewhat mute while giving Black active possibilities, for example ...♗a5, ...b4,

...♗d7-e5-c4, ...♖d7-f5 and ...♗fc8. The important thing is to keep guard over the c6-square and prevent a4 (which can now be met by ...b4); having given White the two bishops it is important to keep them under control!

b22) 10 ♖a4 ♗xf3 (don't forget to play this first! 10...c6 11 e5! wins a piece for White) 11 ♗xf3 (11 gxf3 c6 is better for Black since 12 b4? ♗xd5! is deadly) 11...c6 (D) and now:

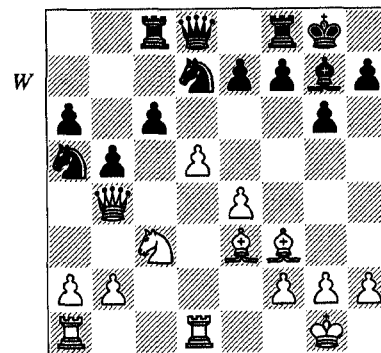


b221) 12 dxc6?! is much too compliant since White's bishop-pair have little to latch onto and Black's pieces have excellent anchorage in the centre, with particular inclinations towards the d4 point. After 12...♗xc6 13 ♗e3 ♗e5 (13...♖a5!?, 13...♗d7!?) 14 ♗e2 a6! 15 ♖b3 b5 16 0-0 ♖b8 Black was comfortably equal in Lima-Kouatly, Manila OL 1992 and followed up with ...♗c8 and ...e6, when ...♗c4 became a major idea.

It may seem surprising that Black is so comfortable in a symmetrical open position where White has two bishops. This is mainly due to White's pawn on

e4, which not only restricts White's unopposed light-squared bishop but also gives Black prospects for counterplay on the weakened squares on the d-file.

b222) 12 0-0!? is thought to be better for White but I don't understand why nobody has now followed the suggestion of Botvinnik and played 12...b5! 13 ♖b4 (little room for quibbling there; 13 ♖d1 b4 14 ♗a4 cxd5 15 exd5 ♗c8 seems to be fully adequate for Black) 13...a6 14 ♗d1 (14 a4? c5! 15 ♖xc5 ♗b3 is not ideal for White; 14 ♗e3 ♗d7 13 ♖b4 ♗c8 offers Black excellent practical prospects and is commended to club players looking for some excitement with the eager lady; however, White has no real weaknesses to attack and still has the centre and the two bishops so I would be very surprised if this idea withstands the test of time) and then:

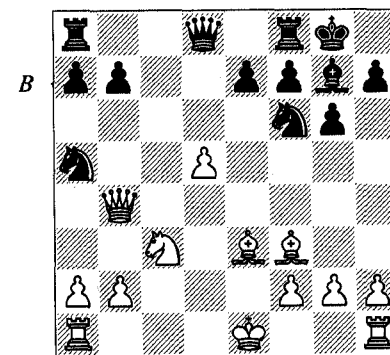


Botvinnik stops here and says that the position is equal. I am truly astonished that this idea has not caught on since both the source and content of the idea are brimming with quality. Now the threat of ...c5 obliges 16 dxc6 ♗xc6 17 ♖b3, when Lalić's suggestion of 17...e6 followed by ...♖e7 looks at least equal for Black. Actually, I think Black may already be better here because of the greater scope and

harmony of the pieces, but that may be pushing our luck!

b23) 10 ♖b4. I think that the above variation with ...b5 is probably why Russian GM Bareev, brought up in the Soviet school of chess, prefers to play the queen to b4. Indeed, I suspect that this variation is the critical test of 9...♗g4. 10...♗xf3 is again worth playing before White catches you out with e5. 11 ♗xf3 (11 gxf3 c6 offers less than nothing for White) 11...c6! (if the following play seems too protracted for your liking, then the crazy gambit 11...c5!? 12 ♖xc5 ♗d7 13 ♖b4 ♗c8 offers Black excellent practical prospects and is commended to club players looking for some excitement with the eager lady; however, White has no real weaknesses to attack and still has the centre and the two bishops so I would be very surprised if this idea withstands the test of time) and then:

b231) 12 ♗e3 cxd5 13 exd5 (D) and here:



b2311) 13...♗e8 14 ♗b5! ♗d6 15 ♗c1 b6 16 ♗xd6 exd6 17 ♖b5! gives

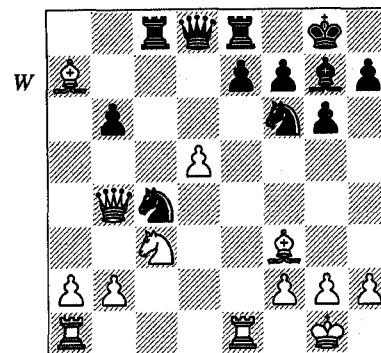
us a classic case of what Black should be trying to avoid. White has more space, two bishops, and firm control of the c-file. Indeed, I suspect that Black is positionally lost. It is imperative for Black to avoid such passivity and quickly make use of the c-file and c4-square even if it means gambiting the a7-pawn.

b2312) 13...♖c8!. Although there is no immediate pressure on the black position it is important to play actively because there is a very real possibility of White cutting out Black's counterplay and using his space advantage and two bishops to cause Black no end of grief. 14 ♗xa7 ♘c4 15 0-0 ♘d2 16 ♜fd1 ♜c4 17 ♞b6 ♘xf3+ 18 gxf3 ♞c8 19 ♜d4 ♘h5 20 ♜xc4 ♞xc4 21 ♞e3 ♗xc3 22 bxc3 was now agreed drawn in Farago-J.Horvath, Hungarian Ch 1991 but obviously this is a premature cessation. From a practical point of view I would definitely prefer Black due to the relative safety of the kings.

b232) 12 0-0 cxd5 (12...♞b6!? 13 ♞a4 ♘d7 14 ♗e3 ♞xb2 15 ♜fc1 ♗xc3 16 ♜ab1 b5 17 ♜xb2 bxa4 18 ♜xc3 cxd5 19 exd5 ♜ac8 20 ♜bc2 ♘b6 also turned out OK for Black in Babula-Mirumian, Czech Cht 1997 and knowing something of Mirumian's play I suspect this idea was well prepared) 13 exd5 (blockading Delroy with ...♘e8-d6 may look like a good plan for Black now but it is actually too defensive in nature; Black should not be seeking to consolidate because the static features of the position favour White; however, Black has excellent

prospects if he quickly tries to exploit the temporary disorder in White's position) 13...♜c8! 14 ♜e1 ♜e8 (this is not exactly spirited, but sometimes you just have to play the best move at a particular moment, even if it is not in accordance with your general intentions) 15 ♗e3 ♘c4! (15...b6?! intending ...♘c4 gives White enough time to get his ship in order: 16 ♜ad1 ♘c4 17 ♗c1 – in such a position White would again have some advantage since being completely mobilized and having the 'underbelly' on b2 protected offers Black little dynamism and therefore White's 'static' advantages are likely to be the more significant) 16 ♗xa7 b6 (16...♘d7!?! is mentioned by Bareev in *Informator* 72 and most of the following is based on his notes; I see no need for an extensive analysis of such positions but I have looked at this game quite closely since it seems to be a fairly typical game for this line; of course you don't need to worry about learning the variations, as long as you realize that generally speaking in this line, Black is seeking to change the position and White is seeking to preserve it, but once White takes the bait on a7 Black tends to take advantage of the bishop's absence from d2 to play ...♘d2 and then mess up White's king-side with ...♘xf3) and then (D):

b2321) 17 b3 ♘d2 18 ♗xb6 ♘xf3+ 19 gxf3 ♞d7 gives Black excellent compensation for the two-pawn deficit; from here on in, Black would be well advised to forget that the a- and b-files exist and White will then be over-burdened because whereas Black



can focus all his energies on 75% of the board, White has to spread his attention over all 64 squares – I am partly joking of course, but I would imagine that this would be something like the approach taken by a practical player like GM Julian Hodgson, whom I suspect would much rather have the black pieces here.

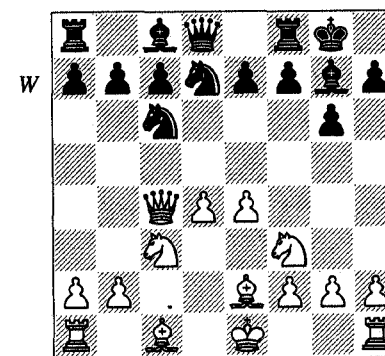
b2322) 17 ♗e2 ♘d5 18 ♘xd5 ♞xd5 19 ♜ad1 ♞b7 is about equal but Black may claim a niggly in the resulting opposite-bishop position due to the extra unit for his king's pawn shield.

b2323) 17 ♜ad1 ♘d7 just looks good for Black since there the bishop on a7 has little chance of parole.

b2324) 17 ♜ac1 ♗h6 (17...♘d7 18 ♘a4! leads to an advantage for White) 18 ♜c2 (18 ♜cd1 ♞c7!? 19 ♘b5 ♞c5 interestingly highlights the fact that Black's h6-bishop has his finger on the pulse of the c-file while White's a7-bishop may not have a pulse for much longer) 18...♘d2 19 ♗xb6 ♘xf3+ 20 gxf3 ♞d7 21 ♞h4 ♞f5 22 ♘e4 ♗g5! is the truly bizarre sequence from

Bareev-Ivanchuk, Elista 1998. Bareev's notes suggest that what happened next was perfectly natural but personally I think we've already moved beyond the twilight zone: 23 ♘xf6+ (23 ♘xg5 ♜xc2 24 d6 e5!) 23...♞xf6! 24 ♜xc8 ♗xh4 25 ♜xe8+ ♗g7 26 ♜e4 1/2-1/2. 26...♞xb6 27 ♜xh4 ♞xb2 28 ♗g2 ♞xa2 29 ♜xe7 ♞xd5 is equal.

Now we return to the position after 8...♘d7 (D):



9 ♗e3

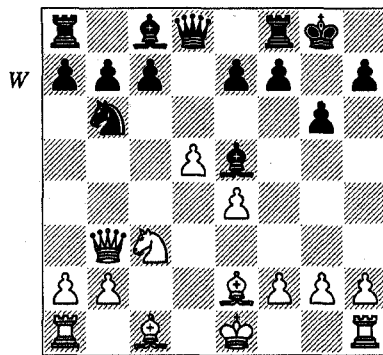
This is a sign that White is willing to enter the main ...♗g4 lines by transposition even though the bishop is committed to e2. From a theoretical standpoint this is already a minor success for Black but I also think that Black now has promising ideas which are unique to 7...♘c6.

9 d5!? is thought to be White's most threatening move at this juncture but this is relatively uncharted territory and I think Black's resources have been underestimated. Now 9...♘ce5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♞b3 e6 12 0-0 is an almost unquestioned sequence which

leads to an advantage for White. Black's position is not so bad but the knight on e5 is actually a little awkward in that it blocks the g7-bishop and the e-file and does nothing to undermine the white centre. Indeed, it doesn't take long to realize that Black would much rather have this knight on b6, where it would attack d5 without interfering with the rest of Black's forces. The closest recognition of this idea that I could find came from *ECO*, which gives the following line based on Farago's comments to the game Farago-Goormachtigh, Brussels 1986: 9...♖b6?! 10 ♖b3 ♘d4 11 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 12 ♙h6 ♙g7 13 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 14 0-0! e6 15 ♚ad1 exd5 16 exd5 ♙d7 17 ♘e4!, and now White is said to be clearly better. There is much to be said about this line. For starters, Black's sixteenth move looks needlessly cooperative and so Black's disadvantage should not be so great. More importantly, 10...♘e5 is not even mentioned. It occurred to me that it was only the exposure of the bishop on d4 that obliged Black to play 12...♙g7 rather than 12...♚e8, which would then have run into 13 0-0-0 ♙xf2 14 e5!. The dark-squared bishop is Black's best piece and exchanging it off this early is definitely undesirable, while ...♚e8 is a useful preparation for ...e6.

Hence (somewhat carelessly) I set about analysing the position after 9 d5 ♖b6 10 ♖b3 ♘e5 11 ♘e5 ♙xe5 (*D*) and I liked what I saw, as can be seen from the following variations:

1) 12 0-0 e6 looks totally unproblematic.



2) 12 a4 c6! is also fine.

3) So considering the *ECO* line, it seemed that 12 ♙h6 would be critical. 12...♚e8! is a fully adequate response, however, since the placement of the bishops on h6 and e5 provides Black significant tactical resources:

31) 13 0-0 e6 threatens ...♙xh2+ and busts up the white centre.

32) 13 f4 e6! is an even more encouraging line since 14 fxe5 ♖h4+ is better for Black and 14 ♙g5 ♙f6 is fully OK.

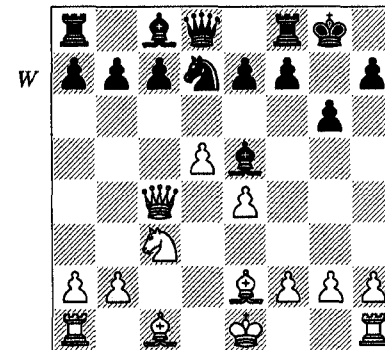
This brings us to White's prophylactic measures:

33) 13 ♚d1 ♖d6! (targeting h2 and f4 and preparing ...e6; 13...c6!? 14 dxc6 ♖c7 may also be good enough) 14 ♖b5 ♖f6 may look somewhat awkward for Black but at this point I think White has no fresh ideas and Black is about to seize the initiative.

34) 13 0-0-0 looks very much like the acid test but then I remembered the above-mentioned idea given by Suetin: 13...c6! 14 dxc6 ♖c7, when I am very keen indeed on Black's prospects.

At this stage I thought I had made a rather important discovery but as I checked from the beginning I realized that the main difference between ...♘e5 and ...♘d4 was that after the former White was not compelled to exchange knights and so I was extremely disappointed to discover that 10...♘e5!? 11 0-0! e6 12 ♙f4! was definitely advantageous to White because the position after 12...♘xf3+ 13 ♙xf3 exd5 14 exd5 is virtually forced and now White is fully and effectively mobilized while Delroy cannot be easily restrained.

Fortunately, for both reader and author, the above ideas are not rendered useless for it seems to me that after 9 d5 Black can try 9...♘ce5 10 ♘xe5 (obliged since 10 ♖b3 ♘c5 followed by ...f5 is ferociously active) 10...♙xe5! (*D*) seeking to transpose into the above-mentioned lines.



I suspect this is possible because in most cases if White wants to differ he will have to try ♖d3, when the queen is not particularly well-placed and

Black's ...f5 pawn-break gains in strength.

a) 11 0-0 ♖b6 12 ♖d3 (12 ♖b3 e6 as above) and now both 12...f5!? and 12...e6!? look adequate.

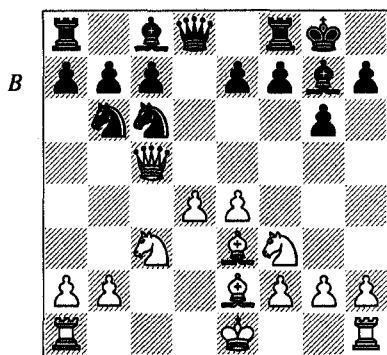
b) 11 f4 ♙g7 12 0-0 c6! (12...♖b6 and ...e6 is also reasonable) 13 dxc6 ♖b6! (13...♖b6+ 14 ♗h1 bxc6 15 e5! may give White some advantage) 14 cxb7 ♙xb7 15 ♖b3 ♖d4+ 16 ♗h1 ♚ac8 is just one way of demonstrating Black's prospects if White pushes one pawn too many. The given position looks rather favourable for Black, for example 17 e5 g5! 18 fxg5 ♙xe5 with dangerous kingside threats.

c) 11 ♙h6 ♖b6 12 ♖d3 (12 ♖b3 ♚e8 – as above) 12...♚e8 13 0-0-0 c6! (13...♖d6!?) 14 dxc6 ♖c7 is not quite as good as it was with the queen on b3 because the e4-pawn is protected and ...♙e6 is less threatening, but still seems to offer Black enough play for the pawn. I am sure you will realize that these lines are by no means exhaustive but it certainly seems to me that Black has reasonable prospects after 9 d5.

9...♖b6 10 ♖c5 (*D*)

10...♘d7!?

As far as I know, this was Djurić's novelty played for the first time in this game. It seems that White now has to acquiesce to a repetition or else allow the freeing move ...e7-e5. From a theoretical perspective this completely vindicates Black's opening strategy but I am also pleased to say that Black can play for more than a draw here without being sucked into too much of the theory from the ...♙g4 line.



"10...f5?! 11 ♖d1!" is all GM Suetin has to say in *The Complete Grünfeld* (Batsford, 1991) and Lalić and ECO imply that Black is obliged to transpose to the Smyslov Variation with 10...g4 but it seems to me that 10...f5!? is in fact a very reasonable approach, especially if we consider that it worked very well when White had played h3 instead of e2 because in that case the bishop wanted to go to d3 in any case and now after the most natural sequence of moves it is irritating for White that g2 in *en prise*. Let us continue the analysis of Suetin's 'line': 11...fxe4 12 ♗e5 (12 d5 exf3 13 dxc6 fxg2! 14 ♖g1 ♗e8; 12 ♗xe4 e6 is again fully comfortable for Black because it's the eager lady that is stunting the prospects of the eager knight on e4) 12...♗d6 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♗xe4 ♗d5. In the analogous position with the bishop on f1 and pawn on h3 White would play ♗c3 now and force a levelish endgame, but of course

he can't here because Black would capture on g2. Hence, the most pertinent question here inquires as to the strength of 15 ♗f3.

However, whether we feel sufficiently trigger-happy to mangle the whole position with an unclear exchange sacrifice on f3, or would rather go for the armchair and slippers approach by taking on c5 followed by ...♗d5, I am happy with the black position in either case.

11 ♗c4 ♗b6 12 ♗c5 ♗d7 13 ♗d5

13 ♗a3 e5! also looks comfortable for Black.

13...e5!

Black is happy to play this move as long as White cannot play d5 while covering d4.

14 ♗d1 exd4 15 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗xd4 c6 17 ♗d6 ♗xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗b6 19 ♗d2 ♗c5 20 0-0 e6 21 ♗fd1

After ...a5 followed by ...♗ae8 and ...♗c8 I think I would rather be Black but considering Black's early play I suspect he was not averse to sharing the point on this occasion.

1/2-1/2

Conclusion

7...♗c6 is a relatively unexplored antidote to the ♗b3 line which seems to have been under-estimated.

The critical line is 8 e2, after which 8...g4!? is standard and reliable, while 8...♗d7 appears to be promising.

13 Hydra

"The nature of God is a circle in which the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere." – St Anselm

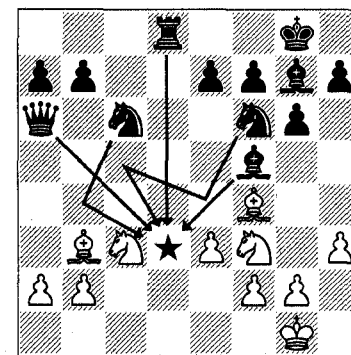
According to Greek Mythology, the Hydra was a many-headed water-snake of the Lernaean Marshes in Argolis. It was variously reputed to have one hundred heads, or fifty, or nine. It was one of the twelve labours of Hercules to kill it, and, as soon as he struck off one of its heads, two shot up in his place! The monster was eventually destroyed by Hercules with the assistance of his charioteer, who applied burning brands to its wounds as soon as each head was severed by its master.

Your author could do with the strength of Hercules now, for of all the lines in the Grünfeld, I consider the systems with e4 to be by far the most "Hydra-headed". I'm not sure if the feeling is shared by other exponents of the opening, but to my mind there seems to be a never-ending stream of ideas for White which can be slain individually without too much difficulty, but together form a formidable monster which never seems to sleep.

Indeed, according to GM Paul van der Sterren, a group of Dutch correspondence players from the 1970s and 1980s called themselves the "Anti-Grünfeld Club" and yet relied almost exclusively on the systems with e4. The problem for black players is not

that any particular line is extremely good for White, but just that White has a vast array of promising approaches and Black usually has to react differently to all of them! I am not blessed with the company of a charioteer, but I have tried to slay this monster without allowing too many heads to shoot up and bewilder you. Moreover, before jumping in to slay the Hydra, I have included the following diagrams to help you understand your challenge a little better.

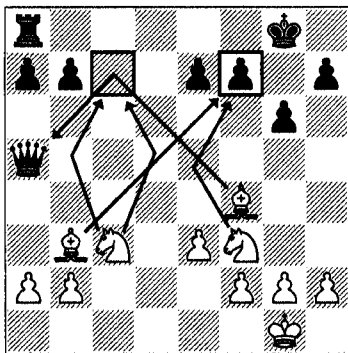
The d3-square



One of the key strategic features of the e4 lines is the long-term weakness of the d3-square caused by White

playing c4 and e3 and then allowing the centre to open. Black's pieces are often ideally placed to exploit this weaknesses but White has go badly astray to allow early infiltration. Still, there is no similar weakness in the black position and so, as the position simplifies, Black can sometimes claim a slight advantage due to his prospects for using this square. A knight on d3 can be particularly devastating, as we can observe in the game Lautier-Ivanchuk included below.

Sensitive squares for Black



The c7 and f7 points can be thought of as sensitive teeth in need of Sensodyne toothpaste. Black's early opening problems are usually associated with these squares and so it's important to keep it tight at the back early on to avoid a nasty ♖b5-c7 hitting the rook or ♗f4-c7 embarrassing the queen. Note that when the black bishop is on c8 White sometimes has

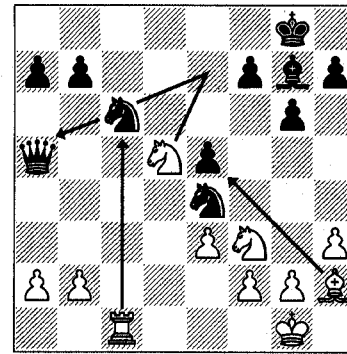
an annoying drawing sequence with ♖b5 or ♖d5-c7 attacking the rook and if it has to move to b8 then the knight moves away attacking the rook with the bishop. Assuming that Black cannot play ...e5 safely, White can then effectively force a draw by perpetually attacking the rook, so watch out for that one too.

As for f7, White's bishop on b3 is ideally poised to cause some damage on this square, often in conjunction with ♖f3-e5. Indeed, White sometimes gives up these minor pieces for rook and pawn in the hope of generating a quick attack; an example is given in note 'b2' to White's 15th move.

As ...♗e6 is rarely possible early on, and ...e6 is not a move you generally want to play, it is advisable to be very cautious about playing ...♗f8-d8. You may think that your rooks are optimal on d8 and c8 but while you are thinking this White will probably have taken your f7-pawn and be thinking about how to mate you. Note the tactic in the suggestion against 12...♗a6 in the main line below as a warning.

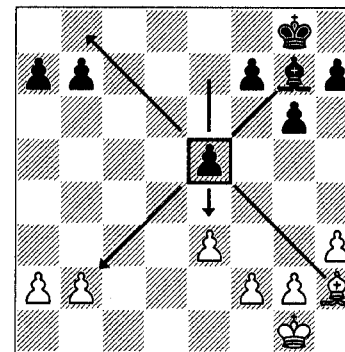
The Sacrifice on c6

Once Black has strengthened his f7- and c7-squares he still has to be attentive to ways for White to break in to the position when he might do something cruel, like holding down ice cream on Black's front teeth. One way he may try to do this is by chopping off Black's key knight on c6 (see diagram on following page). This piece is a vital defender of the e7- and e5-squares



so Black has to be careful that his position doesn't totally collapse as the crusader on d5 trots onto the e7-square and then possibly the c6-square with tempo when a5 and e5 will be *en prise*. Rather than get into a flap about this, Black sometimes does well just to allow it and can often emerge with a new but stable position of the like we'll discuss in note 'a' to White's 15th.

Master and Slave



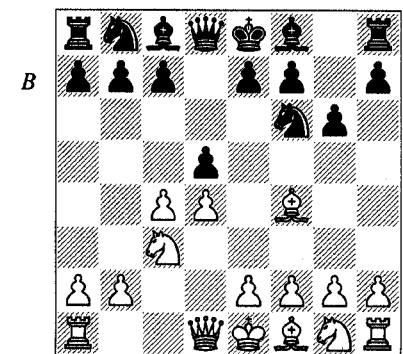
Nietzsche's views on slave morality can help us here because I think the

relationship between these bishops is very much like that between master and slave. Whereas 'master morality' is fundamentally a morality of self-affirmation on the part of the powerful, 'slave morality' is a reactive morality originating in resentment of the powerful on the part of the powerless.

Of course the black bishop is the master and the white bishop is the slave. Although both bishops are restricted, White cannot readily alter the status quo whereas Black not only has the option of re-routing to other diagonals but more importantly holds the power to 'free' both bishops with ...e5-e4. At this point all shackles will be broken. Since White rarely has time to re-route his own bishop or safely fight for his freedom with e4 or f4, the power to free the bishops generally rests entirely in Black's domain.

Game 32
Lukacs - Ftačnik
Stara Zagora Z 1990

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♗f4 (D)



Sharp and polished, this snake has teeth. I consider these teeth sufficiently threatening to cover the theory of this line with close attention to detail for this is the only way we can be sure that we will not be torn to shreds while we look for hidden cavities. Indeed, understanding move-orders, and lots of them, is sadly unavoidable at this juncture. The only recurring theme is that White's bishop starts on f4 in all of what follows and Black has to be attentive to the weakness of his c7-point. The annoyance starts with the realization that White can play e3, Qf3 and Nc1 in various different orders and Black is ill-advised to react in the same way to all of them. To keep confusion to a minimum, I have concentrated mainly on the lines that I consider to be best for Black, explaining in each case why I feel the given move is most in accordance with the demands of the position without referring extensively to distracting alternatives. So we are **not** about to look at a synopsis of the theory for both sides but rather have a succinct account of why I consider the Hydra's heads to be ultimately untimidating.

4... g7

OK, that was an easy one; you play this after 4 Qf3 as well.

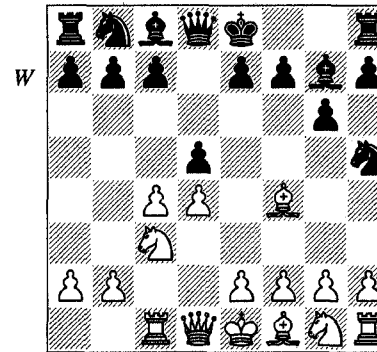
5 e3

This is a relatively sober move and the starting point for the main lines.

5 Nc1 is our first major off-shoot. So what is White playing for? If Black just castled White couldn't yet take the c7-pawn without losing the d4-pawn, so why would he move a major

piece while his kingside is still at home? Firstly I should say that these move-orders can only be fully understood as part of a whole but in a more general sense we could say that White's opening strategy is simply to complete development with his bishop actively placed on f4, eyeing the pawn on c7, and hoping to have a quiet life with e3, Qf3 , e2 and 0-0, when he would have the advantage of a little more central space and control and good chances for play on the queenside. Indeed, this is the resumé of what would happen if Black did play quietly with ...0-0 and, say ...c6. But why now Nc1 and not later?

Well, considering what White is seeking, Black is unlikely to concur, and as we will soon see his active plans include playing ...c5 or sometimes taking on c4 (often both). That considered, White wants to tidy up his queenside to discourage Black from such activity, in the hope that he will compliantly grant White his slight advantage. We will see the general idea behind Black's ...c5 in a moment, but for now it is worth knowing a general rule that I would like to propose, which says that if White plays Nc1 , it is largely directed against an early ...c5 and therefore Black should be wary of playing this before being as ready as his opponent surely is. If you are still confused then I'm not surprised, but these move-orders will only be comprehensible once we have some understanding of the variations. Black should continue with 5... Qh5 ! (D).



Actually, I'm not joking. This cheeky move is not exactly a recurring theme so it's worth convincing yourself that it makes good sense in this particular position. We already know what White is seeking, and we know that he's trying to stop Black gaining active play. 5 Nc1 was something of a liberty in this respect and this move immediately highlights why. White's fifth move was a clever prophylactic measure but it did little to contribute directly to the fight for the centre and did nothing to bolster White's shaky d4-square. So in the absence of Qf3 or e3 White is immediately confronted by the looseness of his jaw; particularly on d4 and f4. If White's knight were on f3 the unpleasant e5 would be possible but now White has an early question to answer.

Firstly, four lines are good for Black, who can make good use of the dark squares:

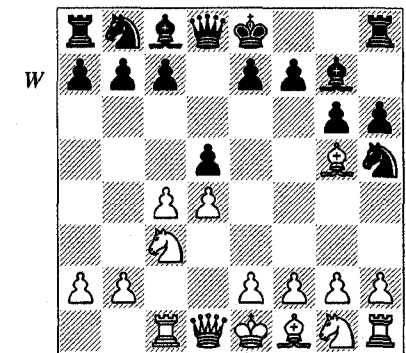
- a) 6 e3?! Qxf4 7 exf4 dxc4.
- b) 6 Wd2 ?! Qxf4 7 Wxf4 dxc4.
- c) 6 g3 Qxg3 7 hxg3 dxc4 8 e3 0-0 9 exc4 c5!.

- d) 6 e5 ?! exe5 7 dxe5 d4!.

The following are serious attempts to gain the advantage:

e) 6 d2 c5! (now that Black has relieved the pressure on c7 he puts in his claim for the d4-square; the following is based on analysis by Stohl) 7 e3 (7 dxc5 d4 and 7 cxd5 cxd4 8 Qb5 Qa6 are both fine for Black) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 dxc4! (it is also possible to play 8... Qc6 , when White would capture on d5 with the pawn; this knight has good prospects on the d7-b6 route, however, and White will now be forced to lose some time defending his d-pawn) 9 exc4 0-0! (the d-pawn was too hot to handle) 10 d5 Qd7 11 Qf3 a6 12 a4 b5! (note this idea is not uncommon in the Grünfeld; Black is still fighting for the centre by opening new lines for his pieces) 13 axb5 Qb6 14 b3 axb5 15 Qxb5 Qxd5 . I prefer Black here because his king has an extra pawn to shield it and the g7-bishop is in its prime.

- f) 6 g5 ! (the critical test of 5... Qh5) 6...h6! (D).

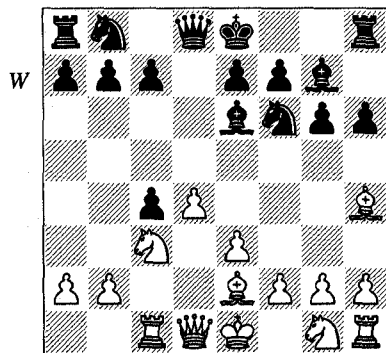


We will soon see that it is good for Black to control g5 so that a bishop can later rest safely on e6. It is also good to keep annoying White and not let him settle down. Now:

f1) 7 ♙d2 is best met by 7... dxc4! . Hang on, why did we play ...c5 when the bishop went to d2 immediately but not when ...h6 was provoked? Well, 7...c5 is also possible here but after opening the centre, Black's king will seek refuge on the kingside and then his structure there looks a little draughty. This would not seem at all abstract if White had a bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal and then could somehow chop off the g6-pawn, but more concretely we could say that the lines with ...c5 are generally unclear while now, in the knowledge that our bishop will be secure on e6, we are simply trying to win a pawn! 8 e3 ♙e6 9 ♞f3 c6 (now if the pawn were on h7 White would have the annoying 10 ♞g5) 10 ♞e4 ♙d5 11 ♚c2 b5 12 ♞c5 ♙xf3! (I always enjoy mangling these pawns). Now after 13 gxf3 ♞d7 the position is unclear but I would prefer to be Black since there is a pawn for collateral if things go wrong, and I am much closer to being fully mobilized.

f2) 7 ♙h4! is more testing. Black once more has a choice between 7...c5 and 7...dxc4 and again I think that the inclusion of ...h6 makes the latter the better of the two. 7...dxc4 8 e3 ♙e6 9 ♙e2 ♞f6! (D).

I reiterate my advice about not being too hot-headed when playing the Grünfeld. You may want to let White take on h5 so that can have 'two



bishops raging on the open board' or something similar, but in this case I can assure you that the structural damage would be considerable. Therefore it's better just to bring the horse back into the fray.

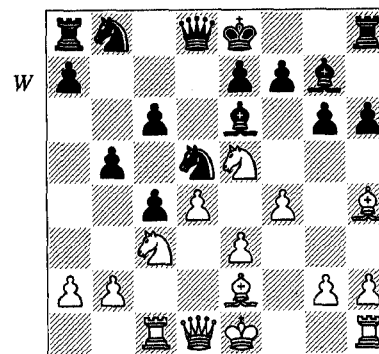
You **do not** have to worry about remembering all the intricacies of what follows. Most of these moves will be understandable when you consider that both sides are wrestling for control of the centre. I have included these lines to help elucidate the point that every move tends to be important in the Grünfeld and to show why it is necessary to be attentive at the cross-over between opening and middle-game.

f21) Note that White cannot win the pawn back with 10 ♚a4+? due to 10...c6, when 11 ♙xc4 b5 probably wasn't on White's menu.

f22) However, White can try the deceptively simple 10 ♙xf6! ?, possibly with ideas of 10... ♙xf6 11 ♞e4 ♙g7 12 ♞c5 ♙d5 13 e4 ♙c6 14 d5, but Black can foil all of this by means of 10... exf6! when his 'new f-pawn'

can help to attack White's centre with ...f5.

f23) 10 ♞f3 c6 (to control d5 and prepare ...b5) 11 ♞e5 (if 11 0-0, then 11... ♞bd7! preventing White's desire to plant his knight on e5 – Black will castle next move and have a good game; note that the e5-square is virtually an outpost now due to the fact that it is difficult for Black to play both an early ...h6 and a later ...f6; 12 ♞e5 ♞xe5 13 dxe5 ♞d5! would now be favourable for Black) 11...b5 12 f4 ♞d5 (D).



In such positions White's compensation consists largely of playing b3 at some stage and then trying to win the backward pawn on c6. The following lines are indicative of the dynamic equilibrium:

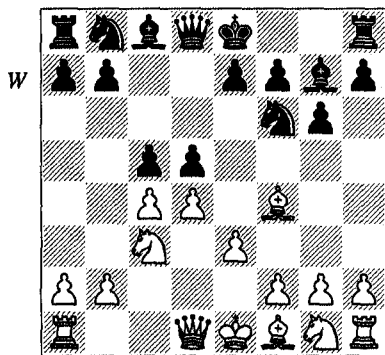
f231) 13 ♚d2 ♞xc3! (note that White was threatening to put his knight on c5 and then play e4, beginning with 14 ♞e4 , so Black stops this – and not a moment too soon; such is the precarious balance of the position that 13...0-0?! 14 ♞e4! already looks

clearly better for White) 14 bxc3 (14 $\text{♚xc3!?$ ♙d5 15 0-0 ♞d7 16 b3 ♞xe5 17 fxe5 cxb3 18 axb3 0-0 19 ♙f3 g5 20 ♙g3 ♚c8 is a thematic line given by Leko; Black is still a pawn up but White has a certain amount of control) 14... ♙d5 15 ♚c2! (I admire the way both players played this game because clearly they had a strong sense of how easy it is to make a small mistake and cede control of the game to the opponent; 15 0-0?! ♞d7! gives Black enough time to control the vital e4-square) 15... ♙f6! 16 ♙f2 ♙xg2! (allowing e4 would leave Black without any good plans but ... ♙f6 had to be played first to prevent any nasties on the g6-square) 17 ♚g1 ♚d5 18 ♙xg2! (White had no choice but to bail out) 18... ♚xg2 19 ♙f3 ♚h3 20 ♙g4 ♚g2 21 ♙f3 ♚h3 22 ♙g4 ♚g2 (and nor did Black since 22... ♚xh2 23 ♙e2! ♙h4 24 ♚f1 ♙xf2 25 ♚xf2 ♚h4 26 f5 g5 27 f6 is intimidating, to say the least). So after 23 ♙f3 1/2-1/2 both sides could be happy with a well-fought game; this was the course of Dreev-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1996. If it bothers you that best play seems to lead to a forced draw then feel free to look at earlier alternatives. Personally, I don't think I'll ever have this exact position in my entire lifetime!

f232) 13 $\text{♙f2!?$ is also suggested by Leko and if you consider the previous line carefully you will see why it is potentially dangerous. 14 ♞e4 is now a positional threat and if White ever plays ♚c2 there will be a threat of ♞xg6 without allowing the defensive retort of ... ♙f6! that we have just seen.

I would imagine the critical line would now be something like 13...♖b6!? (it is important to try to compete for control of the c5-square) 14 ♘e4 ♘d6! 15 b3 ♗xe5 16 fxe5 cxb3 17 axb3 ♙d5. All these lines seem very unclear, but if Black is attentive he has good chances of making his extra pawn count in the end.

5...c5! (D)



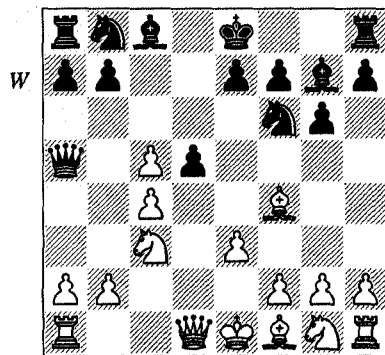
So, no more knights on the rim for the time being. Black can also castle here but I think this unnecessarily gives White several alternatives. In particular, White could then seriously consider capturing the c7-pawn after exchanging on d5 or play 6 ♖c1, when Black's ...c5 break becomes far more complicated. Basically, since ...c5 is Black's most thematic way to fight for the centre I think you should play it as soon as you feel you can safely and before it is somehow prevented. I can assure you that it is safe here!

6 dxc5

There is no good alternative here. If Black captures on d4 he will have

favourable activity like we saw in the notes to Game 1. 6 ♙xb8?! ♗xb8 7 ♗a4+ ♙d7 8 ♗xa7 is an ill-considered pawn-grab which is not likely to work considering the tension in the centre. 8...cxd4 9 ♗xd4 0-0 10 cxd5 ♗a5 11 ♗d2 b5! 12 ♙d3 b4 13 ♘ce2 ♗xd5 was better for Black in Donner-Gheorghiu, Amsterdam 1969.

6...♗a5! (D)



At this point I would like to express my gratitude to a Scottish contemporary, David McLaughlin, who was initially responsible for my interest in the Grünfeld and should therefore be held accountable for all the mistakes in this book! I was playing in the Scottish Under-12 championships at the time and I was told about the opening just before I was due to play a west of Scotland junior called Andrew Davies in the next round after lunch. David suggested that I played this opening and proceeded to demonstrate the first four moves without comment. I tested that White must have four move alternatives but I was assured

that Andrew always put his bishop on f4 and told to pay attention. There followed the sequence leading to the diagram at which point I knew I was on to a good thing. I leant over to take on d5, at which point David pre-empted the completion of the capture by putting the knight on e4 and saying something about "crashing in on c3" which I found rather exciting. A few crisps later the clocks had started and sure enough the bishop came to f4, but strangely I seem to remember that I never plucked up the courage to play ...c5. The game was a draw in the end but I had found a friend in the Grünfeld and it has been a loyal one ever since. I tell this story to highlight that "crashing in on c3", is indeed a key factor in the position and a reason why White often likes to have his rook on c1.

7 ♘f3

Although we soon reach the main line of the ♙f4 systems, this is a slightly peculiar move-order. Black could now rise to White's bait with 7...♘e4 though after 8 ♙e5! ♘xc3 9 ♗d2! ♙xe5 10 ♘xe5 f6 11 ♘f3 dxc4 12 ♖c1! White is certainly not worse. Note that this ♗d2 pinning operation is a central pillar in White's system and should always be borne in mind when you think you are "crashing through on c3".

There are a number of very important alternatives to consider:

a) I promised to try to keep the move-orders simple so I'll simply say that White normally prefers to play 7 ♖c1, when Black should reply 7...dxc4!

and after 8 ♙xc4, continue with 8...0-0! (then 9 ♘f3 transposes to the main game). I should explain that ♖c1 is normally a concealed threat to win material so if Black had castled instead of capturing on c4, White would take on d5 and Black only has enough initiative to win back one pawn but not two. I should also draw your attention to the potential dangers (to Black) of White playing ♘b5 at some point after Black relieves the queen from pinning the knight. Indeed, 8...♗xc5? 9 ♘b5! is already very bad news for Black, who has serious concerns on c7 and f7. 9...♗b4+ 10 ♘f1 doesn't help much as was shown by the one of the world's top grandmasters losing his queen after 10...0-0 11 a3 ♗xb2 12 ♖b1. White then mopped up convincingly in Leitão-Van Wely, Antwerp 1998.

From these observations we can infer the following:

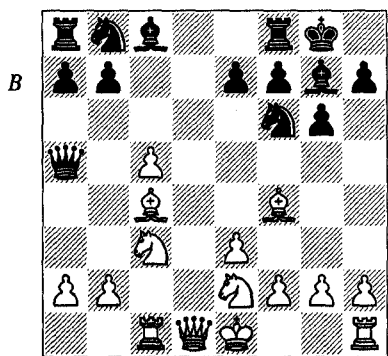
1) ♖c1 tends to be a signal for Black to capture on c4.

2) Black should not take the pawn back on c5 until after he has castled.

I would also like to add a third, which is that castling and taking on c5 are priorities and so they should be generally be played before ...♘c6.

Now I would like to have a look at 9 ♘e2 (D) (after 7 ♖c1 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 0-0), which I think most sources have massively underestimated.

By placing the knight on this square the whole character of the position is different from the main lines. White has ideas of ♘g3-e4 when the queen is on c5, he is better placed to deal with ...e5 and, perhaps most importantly, it



is very difficult to find a secure post for Black's light-squared bishop which can be readily hassled on f5 or g4 with a mixture of f3 and e4 or Qg3 . On the other hand, the knight exerts less influence over the centre and Black's queen can sometimes snuggle up on the h4-square, nestled in by the white knight on g3, which will be close but distant. Indeed this knight on e2 is not obviously on a particularly good route. It is true that it is useful for recapturing on f4 if Black plays ... Qh5 but on f3 it threatens to jump into e5 to attack f7, and somehow I'm less edgy about it jumping to g3.

Still, I think this may well be the shape of things to come in this line for I have found that there are problems with all the conventional recommendations for Black. To a large extent you'll have to take my word for that one, but it shouldn't really be that shocking; White's lead in development is not so great but Black moves the queen twice early on and then quickly has to move it again to get out of the line of fire of White's excellent

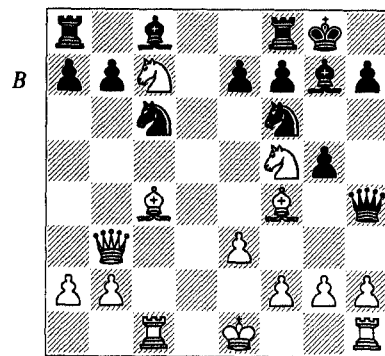
rook on c1. Furthermore, the f7 and c7 points are still very sensitive. If you're thinking of packing the whole thing in right now then think again because although White's pieces are well placed to cause an early accident, they don't really target anything important in the long term. Black's g7-bishop is superior in this respect, targeting White's queenside, and he will rarely be under-employed on this diagonal. Also, White's d3-square is a long-term weakness which will obviously be quite important if Black can soak up the early pressure and seize the initiative. White may also have to lose a little time later on to guard against a back-ranker, and finally it is not always a bad thing to lag a little in development because you retain important flexibility, as we are about to see.

Play continues 9... Wxc5 10 Wb3 (this is another point behind Qe2 though it is not immediately obvious why White prefers to retreat the bishop when the knight is on f3, and we'll consider this in a moment; instead 10 Qb5 Wb4+ 11 Qf1 Qa6 looks fine for Black) and now:

a1) *ECO* now suggests 10... Wa5 11 0-0 Qbd7 12 Bfd1 Qc5 13 Wb5 Wxb5 14 Qxb5 Qe6 , when it gives a few lines reaching equality but to my mind Black is teetering somewhere not far from the brink: 15 Qe5 (15 Qc7 Qxc4 16 Bxc4 Bfd8)! 15... Qxc4 16 Bxc4 Qe6 17 f3 a6 18 Qc7 ?! (18 Qbd4 Bfd8 is given as equal) is not at all pleasant for Black: 18... Bac8 19 Bdc1 Qxc7 20 Qxf6 ! Qxf6 21 Bxc7 Bxc7 22 Bxc7 is by no means forced, but

White has the type of enduring advantage which seems to be quite a consistent outcome of Black's passive approach.

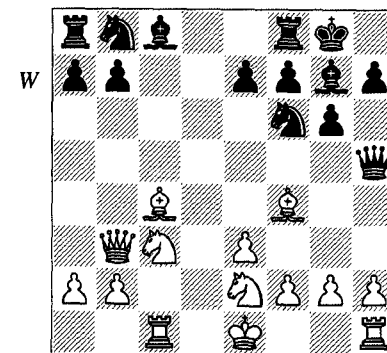
a2) Also, the lines beginning with 10... Qc6 11 Qb5 ! are very dangerous for Black. (If White castled here I suspect Black is fully OK after 11... Wh5 so you could consider returning to 9... Qc6 !? with the idea of 10 0-0 Wxc5 11 Wb3 Wh5 though I suspect 11 Qb5 here is not a toothless wonder, hence my suggested move-order.) 11... Wh5 is now virtually forced. At this point the discovery of Daniela Nutu Gajić of Australia is stunningly bad news for Black: 12 Qg3 ! Wh4 13 Qc7 g5 (13...e5 leads to very sharp play, but after a great deal of analysis, I do not believe it is adequate) 14 Qf5 !! (D).



In all lines Black is losing material for insufficient compensation. This is indeed a beautiful discovery for White, so thanks for that Daniela, but it is very serious from our point of view because it doesn't allow Black to play

the moves that would feel natural to most players.

a3) 10... Wh5 !? (D) is my tentative solution.



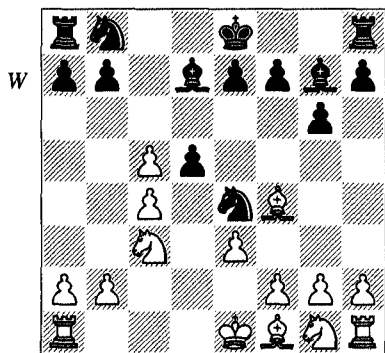
You may feel peeved that our queen-side family are in their beds while the queen goes hunting all by herself, but it's really not that simple. To my mind they are two problems here. The first is that Black has to develop and the second is that it's not easy to do so while defending against White's principal threats: 0-0, Bfd1 and Qd5 and also the more scary threat of Qb5-c7 . Now:

a31) 11 Qb5 is now comfortably met by 11... Qa6 .

a32) 11 0-0 Qc6 looks quite comfy for Black since ... Qa5 is a positional threat that's not easy to meet, e.g. 12 Qb5 Qa5 13 Wb4 Qxc4 14 Qg3 Wh4 15 Bxc4 Qd5 holds it all together. So I hope that's settled for now, although I suspect it won't be the end of the matter.

b) 7 Wa4+ !? is not a simple affair either but with accurate play I think

White cannot justify the time lost in the queen exchange and has little chance of obtaining any advantage. 7...♖xa4 8 ♖xa4 ♕d7! is currently thought to be the most accurate and after 9 ♖c3, 9...♗e4! (D) is a wonderfully disruptive move, championed by Peter Svidler.



Then:

b1) 10 ♖ge2 is best answered by 10...♗xc5!, when 11 ♖xd5 ♖d3+ 12 ♖d2 ♖xf2 13 ♖c7+ ♖d8 14 ♖xa8 e5! 15 ♕g5+ f6 is given as unclear by Svidler who helpfully points out that the knight on a8 is by no means a native. I quibble with the assessment though, and since 16 ♕h4 ♖xh1 now gives Black an important ...g5 resource to prevent the imminent loss of the knight on h1, I presume White has to try 16 ♖g1. Now I like the idea of maintaining my pawns intact with 16...♗e4+ 17 ♖c2 ♖xg5 and at this point further analysis seems unnecessary. As long as Black is not impatient about winning the knight on a8, there is no way for it to get out and so

Black's greater central control, two bishops and better structure mean that his long-term prospects must be preferred.

b2) 10 ♖xe4 dxe4 11 0-0-0 ♖a6 gives Black a huge advantage primarily due to White's exposed king, Black's space advantage and the weak d3-square.

b3) 10 ♖xd5 ♖a6 and then:

b31) 11 ♖b1 ♕f5! is another of Svidler's mysterious unclear lines.

b311) At first I was worried by 12 g4!? but 12...♕xg4 13 f3 ♕f5 does not seem worse for Black.

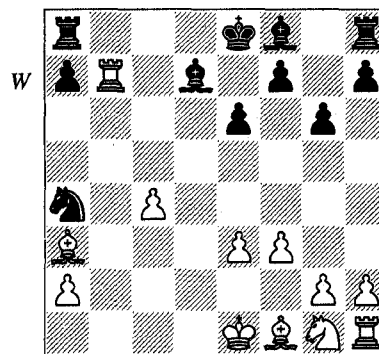
b312) 12 ♕d3 is a rather more serious attempt. White is two pawns up after all so Black has to keep on kicking somehow. 12...♖exc5 13 ♕xf5 gxf5 14 b4! ♖d3+ 15 ♖e2 does not seem adequate in this respect so I wonder if Svidler's idea is 12...♖axc5 13 ♖c7+ ♖f8, which does indeed seem to put White in a quandary. As far as I can tell Black is better here.

b32) 11 f3 has been the choice of all grandmasters playing the white side so far. After the obligatory 11...♖exc5, there is:

b321) 12 ♕g5 ♕xb2 13 ♖b1 f6! is about equal because both sides will have messed up their structures. Personally I slightly prefer Black, though, because the bishop is less restricted and the knights have more anchorage.

b322) 12 ♖b1!? was also mentioned by Svidler and has recently been tested in two games by Novikov. Svidler gave 12...e6! 13 ♖c7+ ♖xc7 14 ♕xc7 ♖a4! as unclear but now Novikov has tried to prove something

for White with the sweet idea of 15 ♕d6 ♖xb2 16 ♕a3. This is undoubtedly clever but Sutovsky was up to the challenge in a recent game from Koszalin 1998: 16...♖a4 17 ♖xb7 ♕f8! (D).



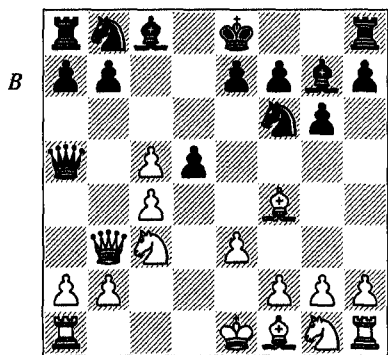
A deep and beautiful move by the former World Junior Champion. The bishop was virtually redundant on the traditional diagonal so it exchanges itself for White's best minor piece and allows the black king to stand proudly on e7. Play continued 18 ♕xf8 ♖xf8 19 ♖e2 ♖e7 (he could also have tried 19...♖c5, when 20 ♖c7 ♖a6 at least shows us that we are on the right lines, though of course Black is right to play for a win) 20 ♖d4 ♖c5 21 ♖b4 ♖fb8 22 a3! (Novikov has defended well, but experienced Grünfelders will know that only Black can win from such positions because White's pieces are ineffective and the queenside pawns are weak) and now the hasty 22...a5?! allowed White to hold on for a draw by using the b5-square with 23 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 24 ♖b5. Instead 22...♖a6! looks

much more testing: 23 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 24 ♖b5 ♖b7! (slow – but Black's initiative is unlikely to net more than two pawns so he has to hold on to his a-pawn even if it allows White to almost catch up in development) 25 ♖d2 ♖c5 26 ♖c2 a6 27 ♖c3 ♕a4+! 28 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 29 c5 ♖b2+! 30 ♖c1 ♖a2 shows the extent of White's disarray.

b323) 12 0-0-0 was Van Wely's choice but obviously Black now has good chances to attack the white king. 12...e6! 13 ♖c7+ (13 ♖c3 ♕xc3 intending ...e5 and ...♕e6 is at least equal for Black; after 14 bxc3 f6! Black reclaims some dark squares and will continue with ...e5 and ...♕e6) 13...♖xc7 14 ♕xc7 ♖c8 15 ♕d6 b5! (it's important to strike while the iron is hot; indeed, a cold iron is not much use to anyone) 16 b3 (this seems to be White's only move, since Black had various threats involving ...♖a4) 16...bxc4 17 ♕xc4 ♖a4! 18 ♖d2 (again it's good to see White being forced to play an 'only' move; 18...♕b5 was the principal threat) 18...♕b5 19 ♖c2 ♕xc4 20 bxc4 ♖d7 (finally the rooks are connected; the only question now, as it often is in the Grünfeld, is whether Black can win the material back while keeping some initiative) 21 c5 (a safer way to neutralize the pressure was 21 ♕a3 ♖c6 22 ♖e2 ♖hc8 23 ♖d1+, when after 23...♖e8 White should be able to hold as long as he avoids 24 ♖d6? ♕f8) 21...♖c6 22 ♖e2. Svidler was probably quite happy with this theoretical victory and agreed to a draw here but he could have tried for a more tangible victory with 22...♖xc5!,

when Black has some winning prospects in the resulting endgame with rook and bishop against rook and knight.

c) 7 ♖b3!? (D) has been played a few times and has increased in popularity after being suggested in Shereshevsky's excellent book *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*.



The main idea is to exchange queens with ♖b5+ while avoiding the time-loss involved in 7 ♖a4+. There are many adequate replies to be found in standard sources, but I am particularly impressed by the vintage Grünfeld performance given by Black in Lautier-Ivanchuk, Monaco Amber rapid 1998, which began with the combative 7...♗d7!? stopping White's main idea. Of course, we shouldn't think that the players are necessarily following carefully prepared home analysis. I'm sure White's play can be improved on but Black's general conception looks very sound indeed. 8 ♗e5!? (presumably 8 ♖xb7 0-0! is the idea, when 9 ♖xa8 ♗c6 10 ♖xb8 ♗xb8 11 ♗xb8 ♗e4

looks very good for Black despite the material deficit; 8 ♗f3 0-0 intending ...♗a6 also looks promising for Black's position is bursting with dynamic energy here) 8...dxc4 9 ♗xc4 0-0 10 ♗f3 ♗a6 11 0-0 ♗xc5 12 ♖c2 b5! 13 ♗d5 ♗ac8 14 a3 ♗f5 15 ♖d2 ♗d3 16 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♗e4 ♖xd2 18 ♗xf6+ exf6 19 ♗xd2 ♗fd8 20 e4 ♗e6 21 ♗xe6 fxe6 22 ♗f3 e5!. Although it looks like Lautier was definitely caught off-guard in the opening, I admire the energy with which Ivanchuk played this game. He now has a clear endgame advantage and went on to win forty moves later.

d) Finally we have White's crudest approach: 7 cxd5 ♗xd5! (7...♗e4?! 8 ♗c1 ♗xc3 9 ♖d2) 8 ♖xd5 ♗xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♖xc3+ 10 ♗e2 ♖xa1 11 ♗e5!. This is the point of White's play but it is now thought to be asking a little too much after 11...♖b1! 12 ♗xh8 ♗e6 13 ♖d3 (stopping ...♗c4+) 13...♖xa2+ 14 ♗f3 f6!, when White's bishop is either trapped or takes so long to get out that Black generates a huge initiative. Note that after 15 ♗g7! it is best to play 15...♗d7! so as to take on c5 with tempo. This line may look annoyingly complex but it's really quite straightforward when you consider it a move at a time.

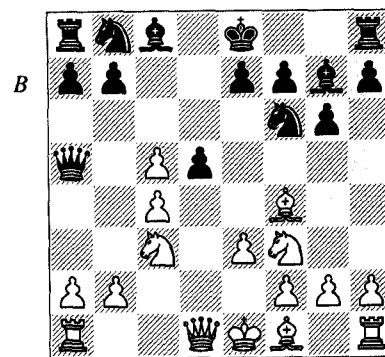
Returning to the position after 7 ♗f3 (D):

7...0-0!

Note that Black follows the given guidelines.

8 ♗c1 dxc4!

8...♗e4 is a major alternative here but it is definitely more risky for Black



and much more difficult to explain in conceptual terms.

9 ♗xc4 ♖xc5 10 ♗b3

Few players flinch before playing this move but I wonder what would happen after 10 ♖b3!?

Ah ha! This question highlights another distinct feature of placing the knight on e2; the rook on c1 is protected! This is actually very relevant since now, with the knight on f3, Black can play 10...♗c6 11 ♗b5 ♗e6!, when White is even in some danger due to the threat of ...♗a5.

10 ♖e2 ♗g4! is already comfortable for Black as it always tends to be when White allows this pin.

10 ♗b5!? ♗e6! is quite complicated but seems to be better for Black. Don't try too hard to remember the following lines; just try to understand them and know that you have good chances after 10...♗e6 – in other words trust yourself to find good moves at the board. 11 ♗c7 (11 ♗xe6 ♖xb5 12 ♗b3 ♗c6 is excellent for Black due to his lead in development and scope for his pieces) 11...♗xc4 and now:

a) 12 ♗d2 b5 13 b3 ♗d5 14 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 15 bxc4 ♖xg2 will lead to Black being rewarded for his efforts with an extra pawn.

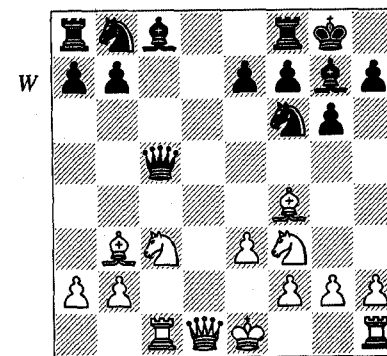
b) 12 b3 ♖a5+ 13 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 14 ♗xd2 ♗d3 15 ♗xa8 ♗d5 16 ♗c7 ♗c8 17 ♗f3 ♗xf4 18 exf4 ♗b2 19 ♗d2 ♗xc1+ 20 ♗xc1 ♗e4 gives Black a highly favourable endgame due to the fact that White is obliged to play 21 ♗e1 to avoid horrific structural damage and then Black still has the slightly better structure and advantage of bishop for knight in an open position.

c) 12 ♗xa8 does not seem to be documented, but 12...♗d5 looks good for Black, e.g. 13 b3 ♗c3+!

10...♖a5 (D)

The queen can also go to h5 but there is less chance of it being exchanged on a5 and for various reasons ...♖a5 has a better theoretical reputation.

However, 10...♗c6 is also fully playable and may be preferred by players who like to procrastinate.



11 0-0 ♗c6

I toyed with the idea of suggesting 11...♖a6!? with the idea of ...♘c5 but although White has no clear refutation I couldn't get round the feeling that it's better to put this knight on a secure post after one move than a loose post after two.

12 h3

This is not forced but it helps to prevent ...♗g4 and gives White's bishop a retreat on h2. The benefit of White playing this move is shown by 12 ♖e2 ♘h5! 13 ♗g5 ♗g4 14 ♗h4 ♖b4!, which is an instructive sequence giving Black full equality.

12 ♘g5 is a little scary but all is well after 12...h6 13 ♘ge4 ♘h5!, Tukmakov-Stein, USSR Ch 1970.

12...♗f5

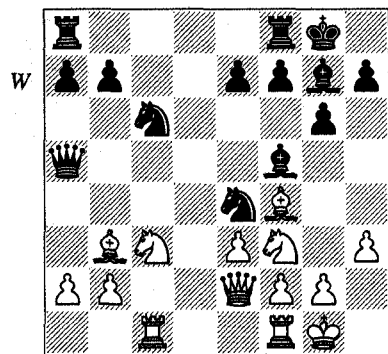
Again I was seeking an alternative to the tried and tested lines and I was particularly interested by 12...♖a6!?, immediately highlighting the weakness on d3 I mentioned earlier. It seems, however, that GM Jonathan Levitt's idea of 13 e4! ♚d8 14 ♖c2! is definitely a little something for White and would quickly be a lot more if Black ventured 14...♘b4 15 ♗xf7+.

13 ♖e2

13 ♘d4?! ♗d7 14 ♖e2 ♘d4 15 exd4 e6 left White struggling to equalize in the game Petursson-Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1989/90.

13...♘e4 (D)

Black's last two moves make a happy pair and I'm glad that we are beginning to see that Black has a well-coordinated position once he avoids the early pitfalls. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly why but it seems to me



that in such positions White has to play with considerable energy to avoid being worse. I guess we can just say that Black's forces are somewhat more harmonious and that now the pressure on c7 and f7 has been relieved Black can turn his thoughts from survival to trying to gain the upper hand. Indeed, these warblings are partly confirmed by the line 14 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♘d2 ♗d5, which is of course more equal than anything else, but I'd rather be Black because my pieces are slightly more useful and I have a potential entry point on d3. It may sound like I'm clutching at straws but from personal experience I can assure you that strong GMs like Jon Speelman would be in no hurry to halve out in such positions. Later on it may be possible to shut the f4-bishop out of the game with the space-gaining ...e5 for example, or perhaps push the a- and b-pawns up the board to pressurize the white queenside. Moreover, the black queen can sit looking rather pretty on e6 after an exchange of bishops whereas White's queen is less likely to find a role.

14 ♘d5!

This is the best move and the only remaining venom in White's system lies in the fangs of this knight.

14 ♘b5?! is shown to be the equivalent of a pretentious grass snake after 14...e5 15 ♗h2 a6 16 ♘a3 ♘c5 17 e4 ♘xb3 18 axb3 ♗e6 19 ♘c4 ♖b5, when Black was better in Mirallès-Pelletier, Swiss Cht 1996.

14...e5!

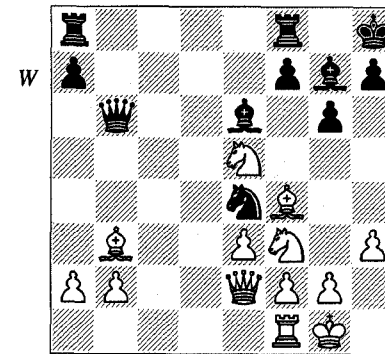
Both dark-squared bishops are placed in quarantine, but Black is normally the one who decides when they get out.

15 ♗h2

This is not a terribly exciting move but it remains the main line since Black seems to have largely solved his problems against the main alternatives:

a) 15 ♚xc6!/? is somewhat frightening to the uninitiated, especially in view of the fact that it was played in Karpov-Kasparov, London/Leningrad Wch (11) 1986. However, Black has had plenty of time to come up with good defences and it seems that it is definitely best simply to take this rook before it does any further damage: 15...bxc6! 16 ♘e7+ ♗h8 17 ♘xc6 (17 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 18 ♘xc6 ♖d2! 19 ♗xe5+ f6 wins material for Black) 17...♖b6 18 ♘xc6 ♗e6! (D).

If what I've said so far makes sense, then the assessment of this position is fairly critical for the appraisal of my suggested remedy to 4 ♗f4. White has two pawns for the exchange and some pieces loitering with intent around the black king. GM Jonathan Levitt has played this line against the Grünfeld



for several years and when I asked him about this position he said that he thought it was simply a matter of taste which side to prefer here but he was fairly comfortable playing White because "Even if things go a bit wrong you always have a few tricks". To my mind these words are particularly pertinent as it does indeed seem that White is rather dependent on the residual initiative that this flurry has generated. Concrete analysis suggests no imminent demise for Black and so personally I am inclined to prefer Black's prospects here, though if I were annotating for *Informator* I would choose to slap on the unclear symbol. The main reason I think Black has an 'unclear advantage' is that there are pawns on both sides of the board. This suits rooks particularly well since they can quickly shift from one side of the board to the other. In the given position all of Black's pieces have considerable scope and reasonable prospects to attack the white queenside pawns. A little thought experiment might get to the point.

If we could sneak a black pawn onto the e7-square there would be no question as to his advantage and yet if we take it off we are told that the position is unclear. One of the reasons for this is that Black's king has slightly less to shield it, but, more pertinently, this pawn's absence reduces Black's winning chances in an exchange-up ending. Even if all the queenside pawns are eliminated, White has fair drawing chances with four pawns against three on the kingside. Still, this is what Black should aim for; rook and three pawns against bishop and four pawns offers good winning chances, for example. Of course White has moves too, but there is very little to latch onto in the black position. 'Tricks' on the kingside are definitely on White's agenda, but I don't see any coherent long-term attacking plan for White if Black is careful, while the achievable aim of exchanging pieces and Hoovering the queenside is a much more tangible prospect:

a1) 19 Qc4 and now 19... Qxc4? 20 Qxc4 Qc5 (as I've said, Black has to be careful not to bite too soon since White does have some initiative; in this respect Black should definitely avoid 20... Qxb2 21 Qxb2 Qxb2 22 Qb1 Qg7 23 Qd5 Qae8 24 Qb7) is given by Karpov with the claim that the position is unclear in *Beating the Grünfeld* (1992), but I don't understand what he's playing at. If Black can't take this pawn on b2 then he shouldn't be in a rush to exchange his sturdy defender on e6 for the somewhat floating knight on c4. Furthermore, the

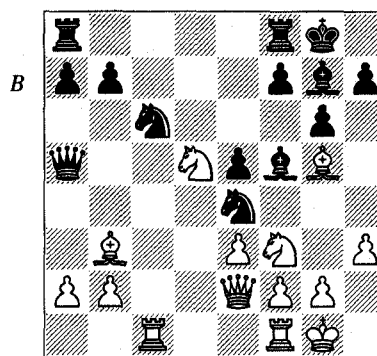
resulting position doesn't seem unclear to me at all; after 21 Qe5 Qg8 White's pressure on f7 is now persistent and it's much easier for White to stabilize the queenside. Indeed, such a position should definitely be avoided for Black. It's a different story, however, after 19... Qa6! , which looks much better. I would definitely prefer to be Black here.

a2) 19 Qc2 Qxb3 20 Qxe4 Qe6 and the position looks very secure for Black.

a3) 19 Qxe6 Qxe6 20 Qc2 Qf6 21 Qa4 Qd5 22 Qg3 and then 22... $\text{Qb6?!$ 23 Qa6 Qd5 24 b3 Qg8 25 Qc1 Qfe8? 26 e4! Qxe4 27 Qxf7 , as in Meins-Lagunow, Berlin 1993 is a very good example of what Black should be avoiding. Allowing the queen to sit on a6 seems to favour White because it restricts the rook on a8. Weakening f7 with ... Qe8 was foolhardy while White's initiative was still bubbling. Moreover, Black should have improved his king much earlier while keeping his strong knight in the centre: 22... Qg8! 23 $\text{Qc1 a5!?$ is a much better interpretation of Black's possibilities. Note that 24 Qc6 Qe8 is not a problem; White will soon be pushed back. As I've said, it is very difficult for White to carve his way into the empty spaces in Black's position – f7 is the only targetable weakness and it can be securely defended.

b) 15 Qg5! (D) .

This has effectively been refuted by 15... Qxg5 (15... $\text{Qc5!?$ also looks OK for Black) 16 Qxg5 Qd8! (16... h6? 17 Qxc6! is best avoided) removing the



main danger and covering important dark squares. Then:

b1) 17 $\text{Qf3?!$ (much too compliant) 17... e4! (gaining space and giving birth to a beautiful baby on g7) 18 Qh2 Qe6! (undermining White's best piece and neutralizing any potential threats to f7) 19 Qb5 a6! (removing threats to the b7-pawn; White cannot take immediately due to ... Qa5) 20 Qc5 Qe5 , centralizing the knight and heading for the d3-square, gave Black a clear positional advantage in Lev-Alterman, Israel 1992.

b2) The only way to test Black's resources is 17 $\text{Qxf7!?$ Qxf7 18 $\text{Qc3 Qd3!?$, which is very sharp but if Black follows up carefully he has good chances of nurturing his slight material advantage.

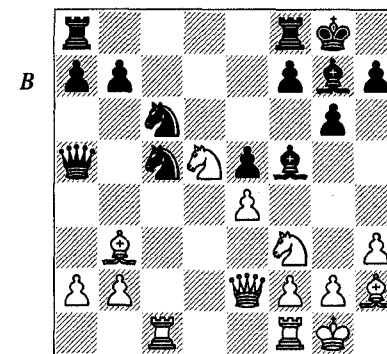
15... $\text{Qc5!?$

I think this is probably best at this juncture and has been approved of by GM Ftačnik, who has no doubt analysed the position quite deeply.

16 $\text{e4!?$ (D)

I think White has to try this if he wants any advantage.

After 16 Qc4 e4 I already prefer Black. Indeed it seems a reasonable generalization to say that if Black can achieve ... e5-e4 in this line while keeping control then the opening will have been a success. Of course, the danger lies in freeing the bishop on h2 so Black has to be sure that White can't land any hits on d6 or c7 in the near future. Lalić now gives 17 Qh4 Qe6 18 Qd6 Qxd5! 19 Qxd5 Qd3 20 Qxf8 Qxd5! 21 Qxg7 Qxc1 22 Qxc1 Qxg7 , which he assesses as approximately equal. I have no quibble with the line but I would have thought that Black is substantially better due to his extra space and the poor position of the white knight.



16... Qad8!

An important move which prevents White from gaining total control. The following show the dangers facing Black against less combative play:

a) 16... Qxe4 17 Qxc5 Qxf3 18 Qe3 Qh6? 19 Qxh6 winning.

b) 16... Qe6 17 Qc4 intending a3 leaves Black without counterplay.

c) 16...♞xb3 17 axb3 ♟e6 18 ♞a1 ♞c5 19 ♞fc1 ♞d6 20 ♞d1 ♞b8 21 b4 also gives White a sizeable initiative.

d) 16...♞xe4! is slightly different, however, and may also be playable for Black. It depends on how you assess 17 g4 ♞c5 18 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 19 gxf5 gxf5, when Black has big ideas like ...e4 and ...♞d4. At first I thought that 20 ♞e3! intending 20...♞xe3 21 fxe3 nipped it in the bud, but I don't see a particularly good follow-up after 20...♞d6. Since Black is comfortable in the main game there is no good reason to try to fathom this, but bear it in mind if you think White missed a good chance in the game.

17 ♞e3?!

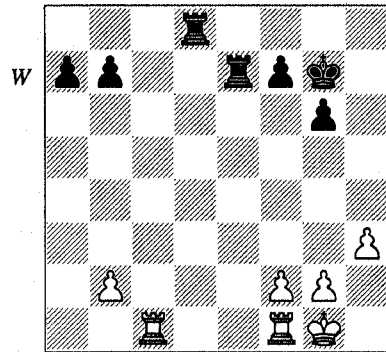
What follows is mainly my insight into Ftačnik's analysis given in *Informator*.

a) 17 ♟c4 simply loses a pawn after 17...♟xe4 18 b4 ♞xb4 19 ♞xb4 ♟xf3 20 ♞xf3 ♞xb4.

b) 17 exf5 ♞xb3 18 ♞xc6 (18 axb3 ♞xd5 is clearly better for Black due to his extra central control and better pawn-structure) 18...♞xd5 19 f6 ♞d4 20 ♞xd4 exd4 21 fxg7 ♞fe8 is a somewhat hairy experience but Black has it all covered and will emerge with extra material.

c) 17 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 18 ♞e7+ ♞h8 19 exf5 (19 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 20 exf5 ♞xb3 21 axb3 ♟f6 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♞c4 ♞d2 24 ♞e4 ♞d7 is an especially instructive sequence because White remains a pawn up but Black has complete control and White will now have to give up his knight for two pawns but will not have a kingside

knock-out and so Black will eventually round up the bad b-pawns and, dare I say it, win the game) 19...♞xb3 20 axb3 ♞fe8 21 b4 ♞xb4 22 ♟xe5 ♞xe7 23 ♟xg7+ ♞xg7 24 ♞xe7 ♞xe7 gives Black a small advantage in the rook ending after 25 fxg6 hxg6! (D).



This is a good example of why a 'queenside majority' can be a meaningful feature of a position and is a fairly common type of Grünfeld endgame. Both sides can create a passed pawn, but whereas Black's king is perfectly placed eventually to greet a passed white h-pawn, Black's passed queenside pawn will be a long way from White's king. Therefore a white rook will have to deal with the oncoming threat, in most cases from a sub-optimal position. Moreover, White's b-pawn is a little weak and Black's king is more active.

d) 17 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 18 exf5 ♞xd5 19 ♟xd5 ♞xd5 20 ♞d1 ♞d4 is slightly better for Black. Ironically, Delroy has switched sides after 21 ♞xd4 exd4, when White doesn't have a good way

to blockade on d3 and will have to weaken the queenside with a3 or b3, giving Black important entry points.

e) 17 ♞fd1!? appears to be the critical test of Black's opening moves so I include the following for instruction and theoretical significance: 17...♟xe4 (17...♞xe4 18 g4 ♞c5 19 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 20 gxf5 gxf5 21 ♞h4 ♞d4 22 ♞xd4! leaves White with a disgraceful number of minor pieces and a dangerous kingside attack) 18 ♞xc5 ♟xf3 19 ♞e3 ♟xd1 20 ♞xa5 and now 20...♟xb3 is the 'official' move, but 20...♞xa5 is a major alternative, and seems to give Black more winning prospects: 21 ♟xd1 (*Editor's note:* 21 ♞e7+ ♞h8 22 ♟d5 might be more genuinely unclear) 21...♞xd5 22 ♟f3 ♞b5 23 b3 is given as unclear by Ftačnik but I'm very confused by this because Black has two rooks and a pawn for the queen and the bishop on h2 is still restricted – maybe Ftačnik is a two bishops maniac or something. Indeed, if I know anything about chess I know that Black is better here; 23...♞c6 looks like the best way to begin. In fact I'm so sure that Black is in control here that I won't bother giving Ftačnik's analysis of 20...♟xb3 which apparently leads to an equal position after another seven complex moves.

17...♞xb3 18 axb3

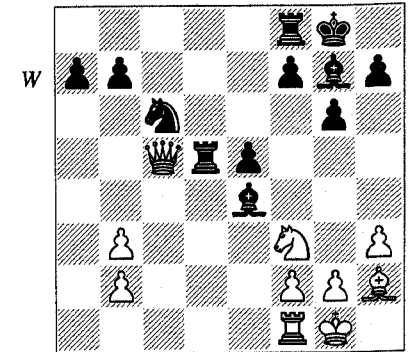
18 ♞xc6 ♞xd5! 19 exd5 bxc6 20 axb3 e4! allows the sleeping monster on g7 to awaken with considerable effect.

18...♟xe4

18...♟e6 19 ♞xc6! is worth mentioning because this capture tends to

be White's main source of trickery in this line. If you keep an eye on this there are good chances of being better, but if you forget about it things can quickly turn sour.

19 ♞c5 ♞xc5 20 ♞xc5 ♞xd5 (D)



The position has stabilized and we are well and truly out of theoretical country in every respect, so sit back and enjoy the show. Material is level but White will have problems with his b-pawns and the h2-bishop remains much less happy than the bishop on g7, which holds the key to the lock on e5.

21 ♞c4?!

21 ♞e3 was better, to avoid the mangled pawns, but Black is still clearly better after 21...♟xf3 22 ♞xf3 ♞fd8 intending ...♞d3.

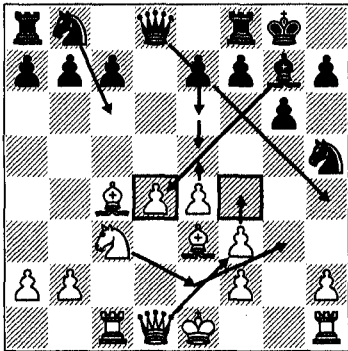
21...♟xf3 22 gxf3 ♞fd8 23 ♟g3

The rest of the game is probably a little marred by time-trouble errors so I'll just give the moves. It is obvious that Black is substantially better and has no weaknesses but he made a misguided transition and somehow White's slippery queen allowed him to escape:

23...♖d2 24 ♖b5! ♜d4 25 ♖xb7 ♜e2+?! 26 ♜g2 ♜xg3 27 ♜xg3 ♙h6 28 ♖xa7 ♖xb2 29 ♖b6 ♖d3 30 ♖a1 ♜g7! 31 ♖a6 ♙g5 32 ♖c7?! ♙f4+ 33 ♜g2 ♖dd2 34 ♖b6 1/2-1/2

There is much to be played for after 34...♜h6!/? but I guess both players were so short of time that further play may have stretched the meaning of the word 'random', and so they agreed to split the point.

The exchange of bishop for knight on f3



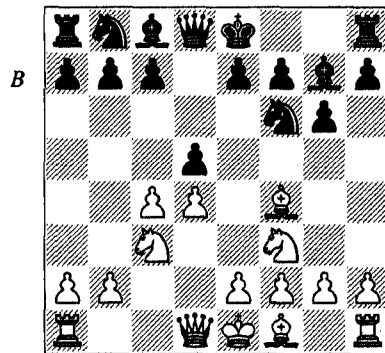
These positions are highly unbalanced with White's central space and two bishops contending with Black's better structure and possibilities for kingside play. Given the chance, White normally seeks to play f3-f4 and then place his queen on f3 to support the kingside. In the meantime Black may play ...e6 to hold back the centre and place his own queen on h4 to pressurize f4. White may also block the centre with e4-e5, which will relieve the

pressure on d4 and open the e4-square and h1-a8 diagonal for White's pieces.

These manoeuvres are contingent on Black playing ...e6 rather than ...e5, which may change things considerably at an early stage. The piece paths are similar, however, and Black should be particularly alert to the white knight trooping over to g3 to confront the black horse on h5, which rarely wants to exchange on g3 because this would considerably improve White's structure.

Game 33 Beliavsky – Leko Dortmund 1998

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜f3 ♙g7 5 ♙f4 (D)



5...0-0!

Simply having a knight on f3 instead of a pawn on e3 makes a big difference as to what is required of Black. The reason I suggest that you tuck your king away here is that grabbing the c7-pawn would now involve more risk to White because he doesn't have

♜e2-c3 and ♖f3 resources and more importantly the following line, which shows a concrete difference in having not played e3, is a theoretical stumbling block at present: 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♖a5 7 cxd5 ♜xd5 8 ♖xd5 ♙xc3+ 9 ♙d2! (note that this retreat would be highly illegal if White's pawn were on e3) 9...♙e6 (9...♙xd2+ 10 ♖xd2 ♖xc5 11 ♖c1 ♖f5 12 ♜d4 ♖d7 13 ♖h6 is good for White since Black has serious coordination problems and weakened dark squares on the kingside) 10 ♖xb7 ♙xd2+ 11 ♜xd2 0-0 12 b4! ♖a4 13 e3! worked well in Van Wely-Kamsky, Groningen 1995 and changed the assessment of this line, which had previously been thought to be better for Black. White has to develop, but previously always put the pawn on e4, which created unnecessary weaknesses and restricted the queen's choice of retreat, thus giving Black enough initiative for his two-pawn deficit. This simple and compact pawn move, however, leaves Black struggling to generate enough activity and so far nobody has found an answer for Black. I have tried but failed; believe me when I tell you that I would have liked to keep the theory simple and then say that ♙f4 could be answered by ...♙g7 followed by ...c5 regardless, but it just ain't true. Sadly, move-orders are of crucial importance in this sharp line and it definitely requires more concrete theoretical knowledge than most.

6 ♖c1

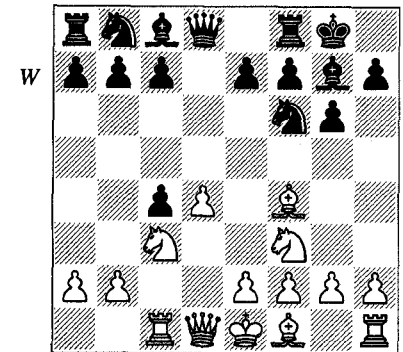
6 cxd5 ♜xd5 7 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 8 ♙xc7 ♜c6 9 e3 ♙f5 gives Black more than enough compensation for the

pawn due to his massive lead in development.

6 e3 c5! 7 dxc5 ♖a5 does not differ from the previous game but 7...♜e4!/? is a major alternative for Grünfeld 'anoraks' to investigate.

6...dxc4! (D)

Once again it is best to view an early ♖c1 as a warning not to play ...c5. Since 6...♜h5 7 ♙e5! looks highly irritating that leaves only the game continuation as an active means to combat the white centre.



7 e4

7 e3 is much less threatening and Black can secure a good game with 7...♙e6!. 8 ♜g5!/? is now the only danger move (8 ♜d2 c5! 9 dxc5 ♜bd7 and 8 ♜e5 c5! are fully OK for Black), when after 8...♙d5 9 e4 h6 10 exd5 hxg5 11 ♙xg5 ♜xd5 12 ♙xc4 ♜b6 13 ♙b3 ♜c6 White is relying on the bishop-pair and prospects for opening the black kingside with the h-pawn, but the d-pawn is very weak and Black's knights are well enough anchored to secure a good game. 14 d5

♖d4 15 0-0 ♜d7 to be followed by ...♜fe8 and ...♞ad8 looks comfortable and note that there's always a bail-out option of taking on b3, c3 and then d5. 14 ♖e2 a5! 15 a4 ♞c8!? 16 0-0 ♖xd4 is also no problem for Black.

A guideline worth mentioning is that when White plays e3, ...♗g4 is not likely to apply serious pressure on d4 and so it is generally better to put the bishop on e6 to protect c4. If White plays e4, however, the bishop will not be secure on e6 and so Black is better off freely donating his extra pawn and concentrate on attacking the centre with ...♗g4.

7...♗g4!

I have never fully trusted 7...b5 and although it is hot theory at the moment it is definitely less trustworthy than the game continuation, which attacks the centre in a more classical manner. That's probably the feeling of Leko too, who was after all the first exponent of 7...b5 and is now playing 7...♗g4.

8 ♗xc4

8 ♗e3!? doesn't seem to be mentioned anywhere but it's not totally obvious what Black should play. However, 8...c5 9 d5 ♜a5! looks like a good answer.

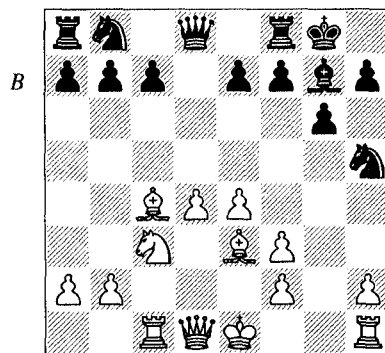
8...♖h5

You may have hoped we'd seen the last of this move but here it is again. Black's opening strategy involves taking the horse on f3 and forcing White to have doubled f-pawns, placing one knight securely on the kingside where it cannot be readily harassed, keeping the bishop trained on the sensitive d4

spot, and the rest of gang will join in depending on circumstances. I think Black can also take on f3 first but then White can try some peculiar gambit lines by taking with the queen – this move-order helps to discourage them. It's also possible to play with the system of development devised by Smyslov, i.e. ...♖fd7 and ...♖b6, but if White is going to have doubled f-pawns this knight looks much more useful on h5 than b6.

9 ♗e3 ♗xf3 10 gxf3 (D)

10 ♜xf3!? does not convince me after 10...♗xd4 11 g4 ♖g7 12 ♞d1 ♖c6 but I'm not sure why Leko didn't completely side-step this mess with 8...♗xf3, when 9 ♜xf3 ♖c6!? 10 d5 ♖d4 11 ♜d3 ♖d7 12 0-0 c5 gives Black good play and was recommended by his former trainer Andras Adorjan in *Winning With the Grünfeld* (1987).



10...e5!?

I think this move effectively neutralizes White's opening system. Black immediately strikes at the centre and

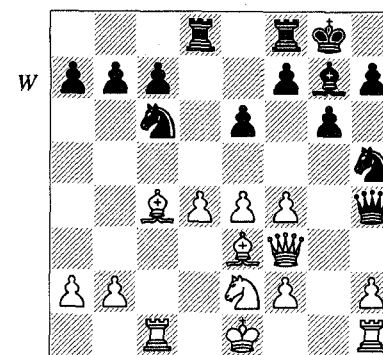
highlights the weakness on f4 before White can prevent this by playing f4. I also think the black position is fully playable after 10...e6, which also looks sound and keeps lots of tension in the position. I will include both systems since the theory of this line is relatively undeveloped. Now White may continue:

a) 11 ♖e2 ♜f6!? 12 ♖g3 ♖f4 13 ♜d2 ♖g2+ 14 ♗e2 ♖xe3 15 fxe3 c5! is a quaint but relevant sequence from the game Nogueiras-Timman, Montpellier Ct 1985, which continued 16 d5 exd5 17 ♗xd5 ♖d7, when Black had good chances in a complex position.

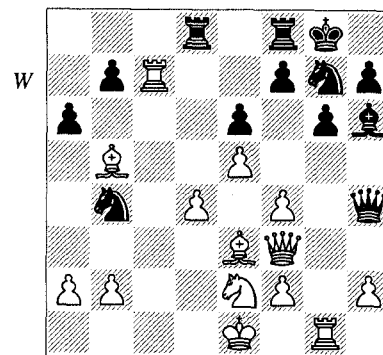
b) 11 e5!? ♖d7! 12 ♖e4 c5! 13 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 14 dxc5 ♗xe5 15 ♜xd8 ♞fxd8 16 b4 ♖f4 leaves an unusual endgame where I think I'd rather be Black because of the pawn-structure. Note that Black did not try to blockade on d5 and attack on d4 but immediately dissolved the centre. Since Black does not have a light-squared bishop, a blockade on d5 is never likely to be particularly secure and if Black played coyly with ...c6 then he has to contend with ♖e4-g3 or ♖e4 and ♗g5.

c) 11 f4 ♜h4! (the queen is ideally placed here; attacking f4 and clearing d8 for a rook) 12 ♜f3 ♖c6 13 ♖e2 ♞ad8 (D) and now:

c1) 14 e5!? was Van Wely's choice against Rötšagov at the Erevan Olympiad 1996. Now Black has to think very carefully about White's intentions if he wants to secure a good middlegame. The pressure against d4 prevents White from exercising the



positional threat of ♖g3 but White also has ideas of ♗b5, or a3 followed by ♗d3-e4. After 14...♗h6 15 ♞g1 ♖g7 16 ♗b5 ♖b4 17 ♞xc7 Black played 17...♖d5 but after 18 ♞xb7 ♖xe3 19 ♜xe3 ♖f5 20 ♜e4 there was not enough counterplay for the material and White went on to win. At first I thought Black's 15th move was an error but then I realized that there was no obvious alternative (15...♖e7?? 16 ♞g4! ♜xh2 17 ♗d2 +-). I think that the real culprit is Black's 17th move, and I recommend 17...a6! (D) as an improvement.



White's opening strategy has been rather ambitious; the king on e1 is by no means totally comfortable and the white rooks are disconnected. The following variations look quite promising for Black:

c11) 18 ♖c4 b5 19 ♗b3 ♘d3+ 20 ♜f1 ♙xb2 21 ♚g3 ♙f5 ♠.

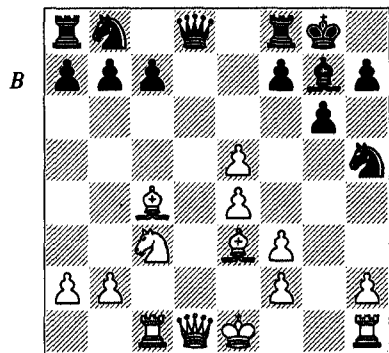
c12) 18 ♗d7 ♚e7 19 f5 ♙xf5 20 ♗xh6 ♙xh6 21 ♚f6 ♚xf6 22 exf6 ♙f5 ♠.

c13) 18 ♜g4 ♚xh2 19 ♜g1 ♚h5 20 ♚xh5 ♙xh5 21 ♗d7 b5 and again Black has a slight advantage.

c2) 14 ♗d1 is more common, and now I recommend 14...a6!?. After this solid move, intending to double on the d-file with 15...♗d7, I think Black has his full share of the chances. Instead GM Krasenkow opted for 14...♙a5?! 15 ♗d3 c5 in the game Dreev-Krasenkow, Kazan 1997 but since White's d4 point was rather tense and this move opens the position for the two bishops, I suspect we won't see a re-run of this particular way of playing. 16 dxc5 ♗xb2 17 0-0!? e5 18 f5! was then very good for White, who went on to win a fine game. This is a further example of what I said earlier about controlling the centre. Before ...♙a5 and ...c5 Black had excellent central control and I don't think he needed to change the nature of the position to have a good game. Sometimes it is better just to have pressure on the centre and think of how to increase it rather than blowing the centre apart prematurely, which can make your pieces less purposeful and is often a relief to White.

11 dxe5 (D)

11 d5?! is very anti-positional because the closed centre restricts White's bishops and gives Black a secure outpost on f4.



11...♗xe5

11...♚h4!? is well worth a try if you are feeling bold, especially at club level. After 12 e6 fxe6 13 ♗xe6+ ♜h8 Black definitely has some dark-square compensation and White now has to be very careful. Black has ideas of ...♙c6-e5, ...♗e5 and ...♙f4 and White's king looks like he's up a certain place without the necessary implement. With Black's knight still on b8 it looks a little hard to believe somehow but now White really has to play a good move or Black's initiative will just grow and grow.

One of the reasons I am suspicious is that Israeli GM V.Mikhalevski played this against GM Kraidman in 1997 and won convincingly, but then preferred 11...♗xe5 12 ♚xd8 ♜xd8 against GM Greenfeld in 1998. In itself this is no good reason to be discouraged because there could be all

sorts of personal or political shenanigans going on, but it does suggest that this 'secret circle' knows something about this line and it's sure to come out eventually.

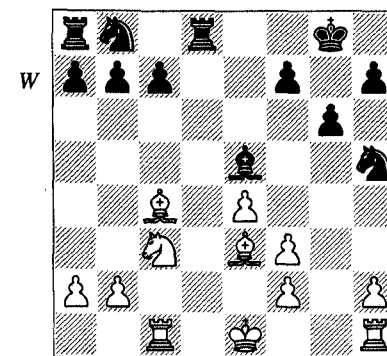
Kraidman-V.Mikhalevski, Givatayim Dov Porath mem 1997 now continued 14 ♙d5 ♙c6 15 ♗g4 ♙f6 16 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♜c5 ♜ad8 18 ♜d5 ♙e5 19 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 20 ♚e2 ♗g7 21 0-0 ♜f8 22 h3 h5 23 f4 hxg4 24 fxe5 ♜f3 and White's resignation topped a very good advertisement for this system. Alternatives include 14 ♗g4!? ♙c6 15 ♗xh5 ♚xh5 16 f4 ♚h3, when Black is better (White has too many tactical problems) and 14 ♚d5!? (intending ♗g5 trapping the queen) 14...♜xf3 15 ♚xb7 ♜xe3+ 16 ♙e2 ♜xe2+ 17 ♙xe2 ♙f4+ 18 ♜f1 ♙xe6 19 ♚xa8 ♚d8, when I don't think Black is worse; White will always have problems with his king.

Your author is somewhat unsure of what to say at this point. I can't find a concrete refutation of Black's conception and if this does turn out to be good then the opening line favoured by GMs like Beliavsky, Dreev and Van Wely is called into question because the position after 11...♚h4 is virtually forced after 7 e4. As the line beginning with 6 ♜c1 is in such a state of flux at the moment I thus have to apologize for presenting three different alternative ways of playing the opening. All the lines are very different and fascinating in their own way and looking at them all will enrich your understanding of the Grünfeld, but basically I suggest you pick whatever tickles your fancy.

12 ♚xd8

12 ♚b3!? is a suggestion of Gipslis in ECO but no analysis is given. I suspect Black should continue the energetic play with 12...♙c6, when 13 ♚xb7 ♚f6 looks rather good for Black and so does 13 ♜d1 ♚f6 – so until further tests I can't be sure that this wasn't a case of a random hand in a post-mortem finding its way into ECO.

12...♜xd8 (D)



It would seem that this endgame offers Black full equality and because it is also asymmetric and full of possibilities for creativity, Black's opening play can be considered a success. White's two bishops are sufficient compensation for his bad structure but I like the fact that Black has no tangible weaknesses to attack. White does have various ways to try to increase the pressure, but it is easier for White to go wrong because without his two bishops there is nothing particularly positive about his position and so, while White has the obscure aim of 'applying pressure with the two bishops',

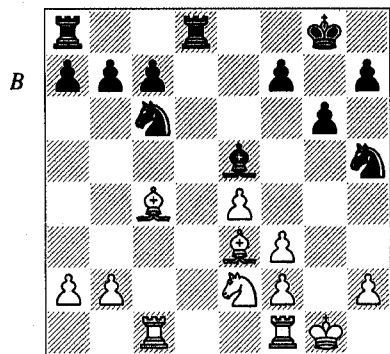
Black has a more concrete aim of trying to exchange one off. They say that the stronger you become, the more you appreciate bishops over knights, which I think is very true. Hence world-class GMs may think they have a little something for White here, but it is imperceptible for most players, who would find Black's position easier to handle.

13 ♖e2

After 13 0-0, 13...♗d7 intending ...c6 and ...♗f8-e6 has been Black's general approach so far but I don't see anything wrong with the much more chunky 13...♗c6 since 14 ♖d5 ♗d4 (14...♗b4!?, 14...♗f4!?) 15 ♖xd4 (15 ♗g2 c6) 15...♖xd4 16 ♗b5 ♖e5 (16...c6!?) 17 ♗xc7 ♖ac8 18 ♗b5 (18 ♗e6 ♖xc1 19 ♗xd8 ♖xh2+) 18...♖xc1 19 ♖xc1 a6 20 ♗c3 ♗f4 looks fully playable for Black.

13...♗c6 14 0-0 (D)

14 f4 ♖xb2 15 ♖b1 ♖a3 16 ♖xb7 ♖ab8 17 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 looks good for Black since ...♗a5 is very effective if White castles.



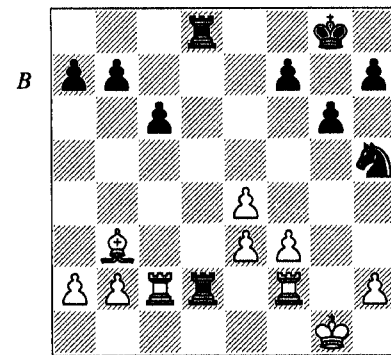
14...♗d4!

Keeping control of the game; if White could play f4, e5 and ♗g3 Black would be seriously worse. 14...♖xb2?! loses control of the game after 15 ♖b1 ♖a3 16 ♖xb7 since 16...♗a5 17 ♖xc7 ♖d6 18 ♖xf7+ seems to be favourable for White: 18...♗f8 (18...♗g7 19 ♖fc1) 19 ♖fc1!.

15 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♖d5 ♖xe3

Not without good reason is Peter Leko nicknamed 'The Equalizer'. Those who are less partial to drawing might consider 16...♖e5!? here since 17 ♖xb7 ♖ab8 18 ♖d5 ♖xb2 19 ♖xa7 ♗f4 seems to give chances to both sides.

17 ♖xe3 c6 18 ♖b3 ♖d2! 19 ♖f2 ♖ad8 20 ♖c2 (D)



Without rooks Black might even have a slight advantage as he could then safely centralize his king and push the queenside pawns without fear of king safety or pawn weaknesses. Hence White is willing to exchange one rook but not two, but there is still nothing wrong with the black position.

20...♖xc2 21 ♖xc2 ♗f8 22 ♗f2 ♗e7 23 ♗e2 ♗g7 24 e5 ♗e6 25 f4 f6! (D)

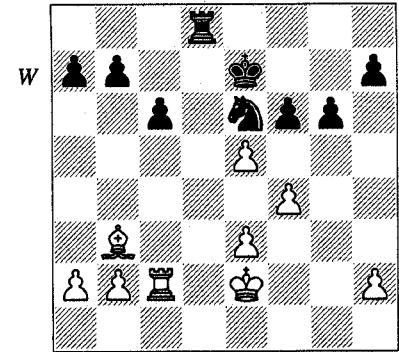
Giving the king some room. Leko knows that White can't push his passed e-pawn without creating weaknesses.

26 exf6+ ♗xf6 27 h4 ♗g7 28 e4 ♗e6 29 ♗e3 ♖d1! 30 ♖xe6 1/2-1/2

White stops himself from overpressing just in time. The resulting rook endgame is equal and although either side can try to win, it could not be done without serious risk of losing.

Conclusion

The lines with ♖f4 are generally very dangerous for Black, mainly because slight move-order nuances oblige

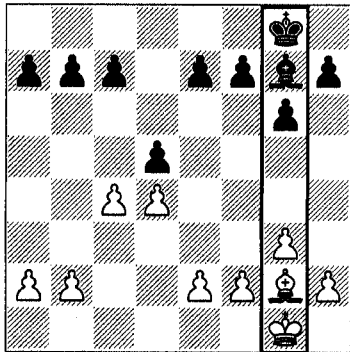


different types of reaction to moves which look very similar. However, there is no particular theoretical danger for Black and so a well-prepared player has good chances in this line.

14 The Silent Corridor

“Silence is sometimes the severest criticism.” – Buxton

The advantage of the first move?!



Most Grünfeld positions are rather fluid, with lots of open lines and diagonals. Over time, I have realized that a particularly favourable feature of such open positions from Black's point of view is that the g7-bishop is generally the best minor piece on the board. Of course this is controversial, but in any case I am quite sure that this is not true of the fianchetto variations. Indeed, in such lines there tends to be a spookily static mirror image on the g-file for several moves which silently overlooks various noisy events in the centre. To be honest, this aspect has

always rather scared me and here is why:

It would seem that structural asymmetry is one of the main attractions of the Grünfeld. I guess one reason for this is that as the position becomes more unbalanced, the extra half-move which is thought to grant White some initiative in the opening phase becomes progressively less tangible. That's not to say that White doesn't have an opening initiative against the Grünfeld, but just that it is much more challenging to identify it in concrete form than it is in, say, the Petroff or the Advance French.

Now, to my mind the fianchetto lines of the Grünfeld are testing for Black precisely because White more or less copies Black while retaining the initiative which many think is gifted to White by the rules of the game. In the diagram we see this being manifested as White applying pressure to the centre before Black. The presence of other pieces usually obliges Black to 'defend' the central d5 point with ...c6 or to 'give way' to the d-pawn by taking on c4. This is ball park for the Grünfeld, but the difference here is that Black's Ace on g7 is fully matched by the bishop on g2.

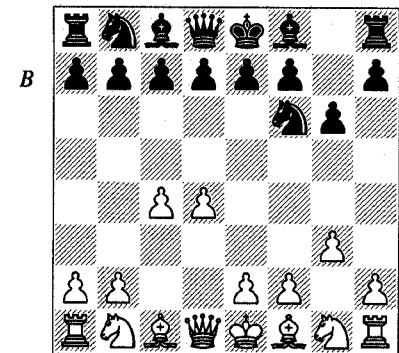
Perhaps it is such thoughts that have led many strong players to bow to White's extra move in the fianchetto lines and play the solid variations which bolster d5 with ...c6. There normally follows an exchange on d5, when the main question again revolves around whether Black can fully neutralize the pressure created by White's extra half-move. Even if this is possible, and from a theoretical standpoint it probably is, then Black can rarely hope to achieve more than an equal position with a locked central structure. It is rather easy and rather obvious to say that these types of positions are not attuned to the spirit of the Grünfeld, but it is much more difficult to suggest convincing alternatives. I am going to try, since if nothing else I have never been fully convinced that it is a disadvantage to be Black in a chess game, and it would not astonish me if several years from now a computer program were to discover that White is in some sort of zugzwang on the very first move.

Game 34

Rogozenko – Ftačnik
Hamburg Ch 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 (D)

This is the most annoying move-order for a Grünfeld player to face, since by not committing his knights White keeps important options open. However, it may comfort you to know that it is quite rarely played because 3...c5!? would now take the game into a strange Benoni, Benko or English



which many players would not be prepared to enter as White.

3... ♗g7

3...d5 is likely to transpose.

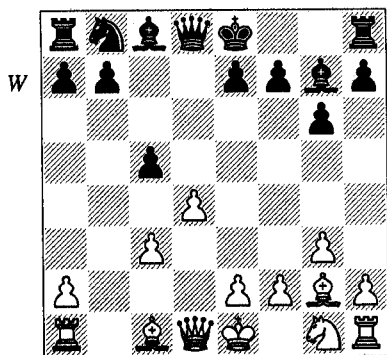
4 ♗g2 d5!?

Conventional wisdom suggests that this move gives White the advantage, but I've always thought it's best to steer clear of conventional wisdom; it just brings you down.

4...c6 5 ♘f3 d5 is a much more solid continuation, but considerably less exciting for Black.

5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 e4!

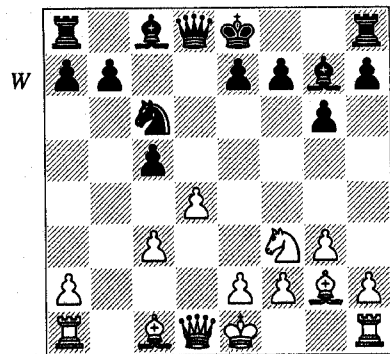
Definitely the most testing move. Note that it is rare for White to combine a kingside fianchetto with a knight on c3 because when Black captures on c3 and plays ...c5 White will generally have a weakened light-square complex, especially on the queenside where the light-squared bishop no longer acts as guardian of c4. Hence, 6 ♘c3 (or 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 g3 ♗g7 6 ♗g2, etc.) 6... ♘xc3 7 bxc3 c5 (D) is probably comfortable for Black but line 'a' is not unproblematic and should be considered carefully.



For a long time it was thought that White did best to play e3 and Qe2, bolstering the centre and not blocking the bishop on g2, but then it became clear that White's pieces didn't coordinate particularly well and the dark-squared bishop struggled to find a role.

a) 8 Qf3 is therefore thought to be the most dangerous approach here and usually involves the plan of recapturing on d4 with the knight or taking on c5 and playing Qd4 with considerable queenside pressure; Qe3 normally forms an important part of these plans. Then 8...Qc6! (D) looks more accurate than castling immediately since then White can play a line with taking on c5 and after ...Qxc3, the bishop on c1 can sometimes make a non-stop journey to h6, which is probably worth avoiding. Now:

a1) 9 e3 is very passive; Black should castle and then find a way to tidy up his queenside before messing up White's! ...Qe6-c4, ...Qc8, ...Qa5-a6, ...Qa5-c4 and sometimes ...e7-e5 are all common themes.



a2) 9 d5 is rarely a good idea for White in such positions because although blocking the g2-bishop is forgivable when there is pressure on the queenside, for example on a backward c7-pawn, it doesn't make good sense here at all. Indeed, I suspect Black does best to ignore the material here and play 9...Qa5! possibly with a slight edge already since it is not all obvious how to make sense of the white position.

a3) 9 Qe3 (the only dangerous try) 9...0-0 (it would be great to avoid the following with some early ...Qa5 trick, but I don't see it since White is always recapturing on d4 with the knight and castling as soon as possible) 10 0-0 cxd4 (this looks fully adequate to me, but if you disagree, it is worth knowing of the following instructive sequence from Ljubojević-Timman, Brussels 1987: 10...Qe6 11 Qa4 cxd4 12 Qxd4 Qxd4 13 Qxd4 Qxd4 14 cxd4 Qd5 15 e4 Qc6 16 Qb4 Qd6! 17 Qb2 {17 Qxd6!? exd6 18 Qfc1! looks to me like a reasonable try for the advantage because the idea

of Qh3 makes it difficult for Black to contest the c-file) 17...e6 with an equal position which presents winning chances to both sides) 11 Qxd4 (11 cxd4 Qe6 leaves Black in control) 11...Qa5 (11...Qd7!?) and now:

a31) 12 Bb1 Qc4 13 Qc1 e5 14 Qb5 a6 (14...Qe7!?) 15 Qxd8 Bxd8 16 Qc7 Ba7! 17 Qg5 f6 18 Qd5+ Qh8 19 Qxc4 fxg5 20 Bfd1 Bf8 21 Bb6 e4 22 Qe6 Qxc3 23 Qxc8 Bxc8 24 Bd7 Qa5 25 Qe6 Qxc7 26 Qee7 b5 is a drawn line given with little comment by Romanishin, but there is scope for improvement by both sides here.

a32) 12 Qc1! has been suggested as an improvement by Romanishin as a way to justify White's damaged structure and is the only unresolved problem for Black in this line. Then 12...Qc4 13 Bd1 Qxe3 14 Qxe3 does look rather harmonious for White. But I don't see a problem for Black after 12...Qd7!. Black intends ...Qc7 and ...Qac8 and it looks to me like everything is under control.

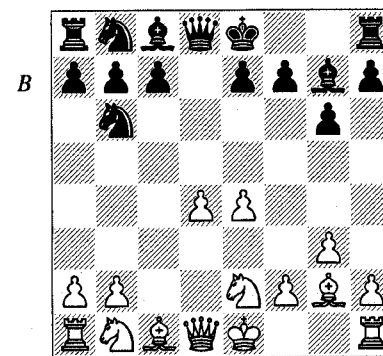
b) 8 e3 Qc6! (again there is no hurry to castle; it's more important to neutralize the g2-bishop) 9 Qe2 Qd7! 10 0-0 Qc8! is tidy. The following give some idea as to how Black should play when the centre remains tense:

b1) 11 Qd2 0-0 12 Qc1 Qa5 13 Qf4 Qc6 14 Qh3 Bb8 15 c4 e5 16 Qe1 Qxc4! 17 Qe6 Qxd2! with advantage to Black, Gilb.Garcia-Smyslov, Havana Capablanca mem 1962.

b2) 11 a4 Qa5 12 e4 0-0 13 d5 e6 14 Ba2 exd5 15 exd5 Qe8 gives Black a well-coordinated position, Gligorić-Korchnoi, Yugoslavia-USSR 1967.

b3) 11 Qa3 Qa5! 12 Qb3 Qa6! 13 Qf4 b6! 14 Bfe1 Qa5 15 Qd1 Qc4 16 Qc1 Qa4! with advantage to Black, Geller-Bronstein, Amsterdam Ct 1956. I strongly advise you to play over that last sequence several times, considering White's options and Black's responses; it contains many vintage Grünfeld ideas and will repay your scrutiny more than my explanation.

6...Qb6 7 Qe2! (D)



It is this sequence of moves which is thought to prevent serious counterplay against White's centre. The underlying idea is that if Black plays ...Qc6 White will push to d5 and then if Black wants space for his pieces he will have to break with ...e6 or ...c6, when White generally just leaves the d-pawn and carries on developing. In most cases, White will remain with a strong clamping pawn on d5 and Black can only remove it very slowly and in doing so allows the white bishop on g2 to become a major player against the black queenside. Something similar applies to the breaks ...c5 and ...e5

where the pawn on d5 will only be dislodged by presenting White with a strong passed d-pawn, whole-heartedly supported by the bishop on g2.

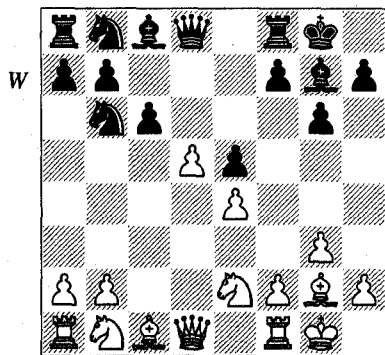
7...e5!

Although I would freely attribute an exclamation to this move, it is worth knowing that Anand has also done so, when annotating a crucial victory against Romanishin in 1993. Smyslov and Botvinnik have played this way too, as have Miles and Krasenkov more recently, and now we are about to consider a game played by Grünfeld guru, Ftačnik, in 1998.

You can probably tell that your author is a little insecure about what follows, which I am, but only a little. Although this whole line has a slightly dubious theoretical heritage for Black, there is no obvious way for White to get an advantage against careful play, and the endorsement by the aforementioned players ought to give at least a little encouragement. Moreover, the main reason I prefer ...e5 to ...c5 is that whereas the queenside majority Black achieves in the ...c5 lines does nothing to stifle the g2-bishop, Black's kingside majority in the positions we are about to consider can often cut the g2-bishop off completely, which can have repercussions for the proud, but lone d-pawn.

8 d5 c6 9 0-0 0-0 (D)

I don't think it matters a great deal whether Black castles before playing ...e5 and there are no major distractions up to this point. However, it's worth knowing that although taking on e5 is generally a bad idea for White



and gives Black a very free game, with a rather useful queenside majority, it is particularly bad if it allows the white king to be displaced on d1, so perhaps that accounts for the chosen move-order. Black should also be attentive to the disruptive idea of a4, which is usually just met comfortably with ...a5 but sometimes relevantly weakens the b6-knight. There was also one game with ♖b3 and h4 when Black castled before playing ...c6; none of this should really concern you, but I'm just saying, be careful!

10 ♖bc3

10 ♖ec3 is an excellent choice when Black has played ...c5 followed by ...e6 because the idea of a4 and ♖a3 is much more dangerous, but here it doesn't give Black so much cause for concern, as these variations suggest: 10...cxd5 11 exd5 ♕f5 (placing the bishop here makes quite good sense in this case because it can sometimes remove the b1-knight and White is less likely to want to continue with b3 and ♕a3, which can be annoying, as we'll see below) 12 a4 ♖d7!?

(holding back ideas of h3 and g4; note that White's kingside is more vulnerable than usual since both the knights are trying to find work on the other flank: 12...♖a6 13 ♖a3 ♜c8 14 g4!? ♕d7 15 ♖ab5 ♜c4 16 h3 h5 17 g5 ♕f5 18 a5 ♖c8 19 d6 was a less controlled but more exciting approach, Djurić-David, Frankfurt 1998) 13 ♜e1 ♖a6 14 a5 ♖c4 15 ♖e4 ♕xe4! 16 ♜xe4 ♜ac8 17 ♜e1 ♖c5 18 ♖c3 f5 19 ♕f1 ♖d6 20 ♕d2 e4 was Fedorowicz-Wolff, New York 1990. I have always been impressed by the way GM Patrick Wolff coordinates his pieces, and this was no exception.

10...cxd5

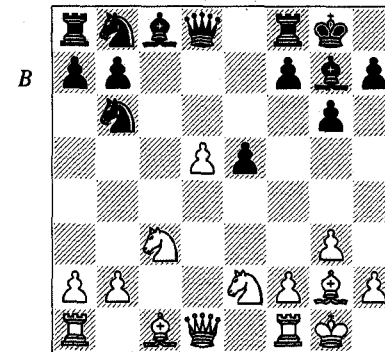
It may well be a good idea to play 10...♖a6! in this position. Experienced players will then play 11 b3 and you can transpose to the game while avoiding the unclear consequences of 12 d6. Also, White taking on d5 with the knight is not a problem – Black can either take it and have less of a space disadvantage, or leave it and claim equality. Less experienced players could conceivably misassess 11 dxc6 bxc6, which may seem to give White an edge on account of Black's broken structure, but actually gives Black some advantage due to his prospects for queenside pressure and the superior scope of the black knights.

11 exd5 (D)

11 ♖xd5 ♖c6 is absolutely fine for Black.

11...♖a6!

This looks like the best move but it has taken a long time for this to become clear. Others:



a) 11...♖c4 looks fairly logical because it is very important to restrain the d-pawn before it does any damage or White gets ideas of pushing it to d6 and following up with ♖b5-c7 or something similarly sinister. However, this horse is absolutely tired out and could do with a rest. It seems more of a priority to get the queenside pieces going. Indeed, 12 ♖e4! ♕f5 (12...f5 13 ♖g5! – Black is not sufficiently developed to deal with such a blow) 13 ♖2c3! ♕xe4 14 ♖xe4 ♖d6 15 ♕g5 f6 16 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 17 ♕e3 left the queen with the burden of blockading and White now had a substantial advantage in Ståhlberg-Smyslov, Budapest Ct 1950.

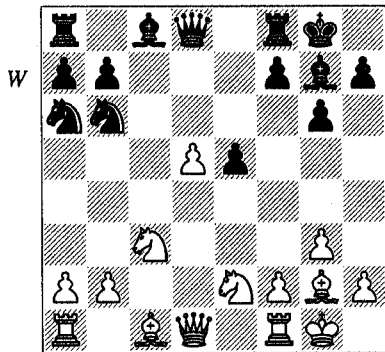
b) 11...♕f5 and now:

b1) 12 ♖e4?! ♕xe4! 13 ♕xe4 ♖c4! is an improvement on line 'a' for Black and was played in Romanishin-Anand, New York PCA Ct (7) 1993. It is an important sequence to understand because Black's position in these lines will only be tenable if Delroy can be kept under lock and key and Black can eventually make good

use of the kingside majority. Ideally the d-pawn should be blockaded by a knight on d6 so this capture on e4 makes good sense when White cannot yet recapture with the other knight. The game continued 14 ♖b3 ♘d6 15 ♙g2 ♘d7, when Black had a solid and harmonious position and went on win.

b2) However, 12 b3! makes it much more difficult for Black to harmonize his forces and the bishop on f5 doesn't look quite right when White doesn't immediately give it the chance to make itself useful. There are many depressing examples showing that the black position just doesn't quite make sense of itself, and you will find this if you play around with the position for a while, bearing in mind White's ideas of a4-a5, ♙a3, d6, ♘d5, ♘b5-c7, h3 and g4, ♖c1, etc. The main problem in all of the games with 11...♙f5 12 b3 was that Black desperately needed to create counterplay with ...f7-f5 but the bishop kept getting in the way.

Returning to the position after 11...♘a6 (D):



12 b3!?

It is very likely that this is White's best move. As far as I can tell, the only serious alternative is 12 d6!?, which feels both threatening and premature. 12...♘c5 13 ♙e3 ♘e6 14 b3 f5! (14...♘d4 is given by Stohl; White emerges with some advantage) 15 f4 e4 was agreed drawn in Lipka-Banas, Slovakian Cht 1995. This is interesting for two reasons. Firstly the result was probably motivated by match considerations since it looks to me like Black is firmly in control in the final position. Secondly, Banas and Ftačnik are both strong Slovakian players playing the same opening. I suspect they have done some work on this line, and I suspect they think that Black is OK.

12...f5!

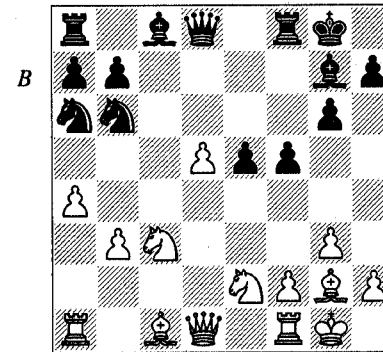
Black's play is very logical because just as White's bishop seeks to renounce its influence on the kingside, Black steps up the pressure there and pays particular homage to the f4-square. It is also true that the advance of Black's f-pawn is particularly troubling due to the placement of the knight on e2; indeed ...f4-f3 is now looming.

13 a4! (D)

A principled reaction; White is just in time to stop Black gaining complete control.

13 ♙a3 ♞f7!? to my knowledge has not yet been tried. It's also possible to put the rook on e8 but this looks awkward and White has various ways to gain an advantage. I always like to second-guess Delroy's intentions, even if rather distant, and I don't like the idea

of him landing on d7 with a tempo on the rook. I also like the fact that the b7-pawn is defended by an active piece. 14 d6 ♙e6 now looks comfortable for Black since Delroy will be securely blockaded, e.g. 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 ♙xd5 ♖e8!? to be followed by ...♞ad8 and possibly ...♙f8.



13...f4!

It's important to get on with it.

13...♙d7 14 ♙a3 ♞f7 15 a5 ♘c8 16 d6 shows the penalty for overt caution.

14 a5

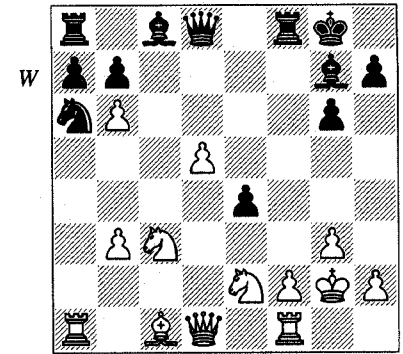
14 gxf4? exf4 15 ♙xf4 ♙xc3 16 ♘xc3 ♞xf4.

14...f3!

Ftačnik tends to check his openings very thoroughly, so I suspect that this is still preparation.

15 axb6 fxg2 16 ♖xg2 e4! (D)

Targeting the weakened light squares on the kingside and preventing White from shutting out the bishop with ♘e4. From here on the moves are much less forced and forcing but at any rate Black can be fully satisfied with the outcome of the opening.



17 ♘d4

17 bxa7? is definitely too greedy as Black's counterplay after 17...♙g4! will be absolutely deadly.

17...h5!?

Maybe 17...♖xb6 18 ♙e3 ♖d8 was even stronger since White can no longer meet ...♖d7 in the same way.

18 h3 ♖xb6 19 ♙e3 ♖d8! 20 ♖e2 ♖d7!? 21 ♞h1 ♖f7 22 ♞ad1 1/2-1/2

Black is definitely not worse.

Game 35

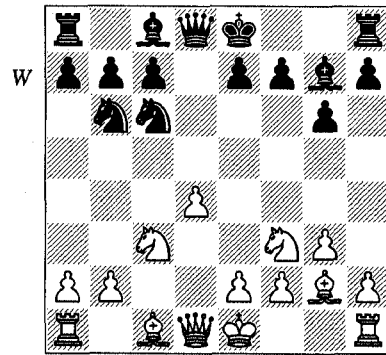
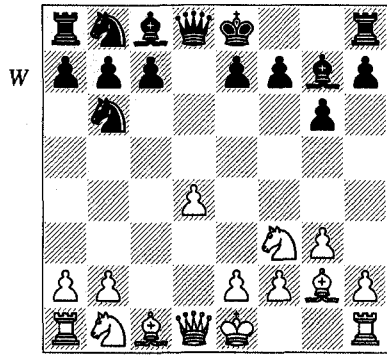
Cvitan – Kožul

Reggio Emilia 1993/4

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♙g7 4 ♙g2 d5 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 d4 ♘b6! (D)

At this point I am going to give the theoryphobes the benefit of the doubt and assume that the reader will be keen on avoiding as much theory as possible.

Firstly, it is worth knowing that 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 ♙g7 4 g3 d5 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 ♙g2 ♘b6 would be a more typical move-order and secondly 6...0-0 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 ♘b6 is more orthodox.



From an objective standpoint I don't think there is anything wrong with castling early but 9 d5!? is definitely a nuisance. Not only is it quite dangerous and theory-compelling for Black, but it is rare that Black can do more than achieve fairly sterile equality, and that tends to be when things go well!

7 d3

7 a4!? is also noteworthy. Then 7...a5! looks best, and now White has to show that something has been gained in return for ceding Black the b4-square. 8 d3 d6 9 0-0 0-0!. The inclusion of a4 and ...a5 would definitely favour White if Black took on d4 but now the d5 lines Black was seeking to avoid are no longer dangerous as the knight can safely go to b4. 10 e4 was now tried by Ruck against Pelletier at the Mitropa Cup (Buk) 1996, when 10...d4 (10...e6!?) 11 d4 e5!? 12 db5 was unclear.

7...d6 (D)

8 e3

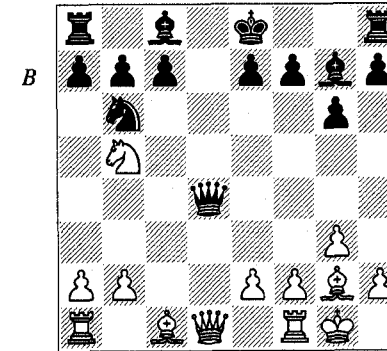
This is the move that Black's move-order is designed to force but in saying that, please note that it is not forced!

8 0-0!? is a sharp alternative which allows Black the chance to be courageous and take the d-pawn: 8...d4 9 d4 d4 ♖d4 (9...e4 seems less accurate: 10 db5 e5 11 ♖d8+ ♗d8 12 ♞d1+!? d7 13 e3 a6 14 da7 c6 15 ♞d2 ♗c7 16 ♞c1 db8 17 b4 looked rather threatening in Krogius-Ma.Tseitlin, USSR 1971) and now:

a) 10 ♖d4 e4 11 db5 e5 12 e4 (slightly counter-intuitive, but Black is just one move from consolidating) 12...xf4 13 gxf4 ♗d8!? (13...0-0 14 dxc7 ♞b8 is equal, though when the position stabilizes, Black could strive for a niggles due to White's kingside structure) 14 ♞fd1+ d7 is undoubtedly risky for Black in the short term, but White needs to play something very creative to counter Black's unravelling plan of ...c6 and ...c7 since there are no tangible weaknesses in Black's position and it is a very healthy extra pawn. One interesting try I found for White was 15 a4!? c6 16 a5 cxb5 17 a6, which is by no means conclusive or unavoidable but I think it's the sort of thing White

has to try. Indeed, in general I suspect that White is struggling to find enough compensation for the pawn.

b) 10 db5 (D) is by far the most dangerous move and leaves Black with an important choice.



b1) 10...♖xd1?!/!? 11 ♞xd1 e5 12 a4!? (12 e4 is equal) encourages Black to think about the difference between taking and being taken. White's extra tempo (♞d1) might make all the difference between an unclear sacrifice and a dangerous initiative but again it's by no means certain that White has a concrete breakthrough.

b2) 10...♖c4 is the main move, but if the analysis of Hungary's IM Robert Ruck in *Informator* 72 is correct (and I think it largely is) then the black position is more unstable than was previously thought. 11 a4! 0-0 12 b3 ♖g4 13 e3 e4 14 ♖a1 c6 15 d7 e5 16 a5! was at least a little better for White in Ruck-Fogarasi, Hungary 1998.

b3) 10...♖c5!? looks like a promising alternative. 11 a4 (11 ♖b3 e4!?)

11...dxa4! is the main idea and now 12 ♖xa4 (after 12 dxc7+ ♖xc7 13 ♖xa4+ e4 d7 White needs a big hit, but I don't see it, e.g. 14 e4 e4 15 e4xc7 e6) 12...e4 13 e4xb7 e4b5 14 e3 (14 ♖a5 ♞b8 15 e3 ♖f5 16 e3 a6! 17 ♖xc7 0-0 18 ♖xe7 e4b2 19 ♞ad1 ♖f6!?) gave Black a chunky endgame advantage in Grabarczyk-Kempinski, Polish Ch 1996) 14...e4 15 e4xc5 ♞b8 16 e4f3 e4b3 and now 17 e4xa7 ♞d8 18 e4c6+ ♗f8 19 e4c5 e4f6 20 ♞a7 ♗g7 and 17 e4c6+ ♗f8 18 ♞xa7 e5 both result in equal endgames according to Beliavsky and Mikhailchishin. While these endings are not riveting, they are not dead draws either.

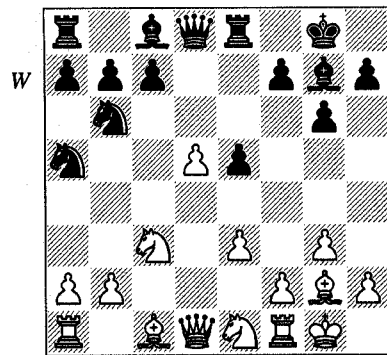
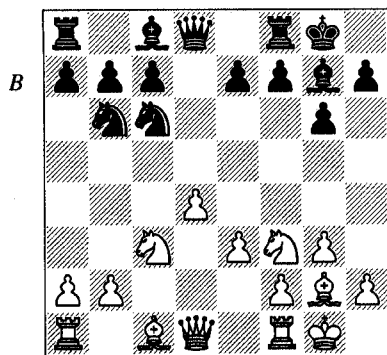
c) 10 a4!? ♖xd1 11 ♞xd1 c6 12 a5 d4 13 a6 0-0 14 axb7 e4b7 15 ♞d7 e4c8 16 ♖xe7 ♞b8 17 ♞exa7 e4e6 led to a draw in the game Davies-Liss, Israel 1994. 10...a6, 10...0-0, 11...e4xc3 and 13...db6 all look like possible improvements for Black.

8...0-0! 9 0-0 (D)

I have omitted the lines where White delays castling or puts his queen's knight somewhere other than c3. They are not at all threatening, and I'm sure you can work them out for yourselves!

9...e8!

An important and instructive waiting move. The key to success in this line is to realize that there is no need to attack the centre immediately because White's position is actually quite passive, and usually only springs to life when Black plays ...e5. Of course this pawn-break is very much on the cards,



but it would seem that Black can make more purposeful waiting moves than White and so ...e5 should be delayed until you feel that you cannot improve your position by any other means.

The immediate 9...e5 offers White good chances for an advantage: 10 d5 ♖a5 (10...e4!? has been suggested by GM Adorjan amongst others but I think Black is struggling to equalize after 11 dxc6 ♜xd1 12 ♜xd1! exf3 13 ♙xf3 bxc6 14 ♙d2) 11 e4 c6 12 ♙g5 f6 13 ♙e3 cxd5 14 ♙xb6! ♜xb6 15 ♜xd5 ♜d8 16 ♜c1 was very comfortable for White in the game Baburin-Příbyl, Liechtenstein 1996.

10 ♜e1!?

Alternatively:

a) 10 ♜e2 e5! gives Black no problems.

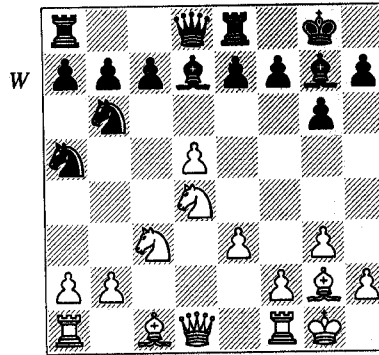
b) 10 ♜e1! e5! (there is nothing to be gained by further delay since White was threatening to take control with ♜d3) 11 d5 ♖a5 (D) and then:

b1) 12 e4 c6! 13 ♜c2 (13 a4!? cxd5 14 exd5 looks fairly unclear, but maybe now Black can try 14...e4!?) 13...cxd5 14 exd5 ♜ac4! offers Black

good prospects. There are various off-shoots now, but remembering to keep Delroy in check and carefully considering your piece coordination should keep you on the right track: 15 b3 ♜d6 16 ♙b2 ♙d7 17 ♜e3 f5 18 ♜e1 h5!? 19 a4 a5!?. This is quite unusual for this variation, and is only advisable when Black has good control of b5. In any case I like the black position here and there followed a draw in Kharitonov-Lputian, Simferopol 1988.

b2) 12 ♜c2?! is an inaccurate move-order in view of 12...e4!, when Kožul gave another model performance for Black in this line against Mikhalchishin, Portorož 1996: 13 ♜xe4 ♜xd5 14 ♜d4 ♜c4! (not an obvious move, but it is important to bring the knight back into the fray) 15 b3?! ♜e5 16 ♙b2 ♜e7 17 ♜d2 ♜d8! 18 ♜ac1 ♜b4 19 f4 ♜g4! 20 h3 ♜h6! 21 a3 ♜d5 22 ♜fe1 ♙xh3! and Black won twelve moves later.

c) 10 d5 obliges Black to play very accurately, but ought not to cause any serious problems. 10...♖a5 11 ♜d4 ♙d7 (D) and now:



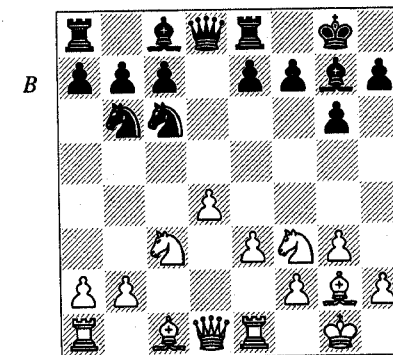
c1) 12 ♜b3!? ♜xb3 13 axb3 c6 is fine for Black.

c2) 12 b4 ♜ac4 13 a4 (13 h3!? c6 14 dxc6 ♙xc6 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 ♜b1 ♜c8 17 ♜g4 e6 18 h4 c5 19 bxc5 ♜xc5 20 ♜e4 ♜d5 21 ♜f3 f5 22 ♜g5 ♜xf3 23 ♜gxf3 e5 24 ♜b5 e4 was a very instructive sequence which turned out well for Black in Razuvaev-Timoshchenko, USSR Cht 1988. Once again, Black had a slightly crippled pawn-structure but more than sufficient dynamism) 13...a5! 14 b5 ♜c8! 15 ♜e1 ♙h3 16 ♙h1 ♜g4! was a little better for Black in Portisch-Kasparov, Reykjavik 1986. White has lots of space, but Black's forces are much better coordinated.

c3) 12 ♜c2!? ♜c8 13 a4 c5! 14 ♜b3 ♜xb3 15 ♜xb3 c4 16 ♜c2 ♙h3 17 e4 ♙xg2 18 ♙xg2 e6! was comfortable for Black in Csom-Ftačnik, Debrecen 1989.

c4) 12 e4 c6 13 b3 cxd5 14 exd5 ♜c8 gives Black a good position since White finds it difficult to counter the threat of a knight sacrifice on c4, or ...e6 detonating the centre.

Returning to the position after 10 ♜e1 (D):



10...h6!?

10...a5! is more common, but I think Kožul understands these positions very well so I suspect we should respect his choice. It is very useful to give the black king some extra breathing space and a good idea to cover g5 since White may want to use this square after ...e5, d5 and e4 and more generally Black might want to play an early ...♙e6, possibly intending ...♜c8 and ...♙h3. Smejkal-Howell, 2nd Bundesliga 1994 is a model example of how to play the black position when White plays insipidly: 11 ♖a4 ♜xa4 12 ♜xa4 e5! 13 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 14 dxe5 ♙xe5 15 ♜d1 ♜e7 16 ♙d2 ♙d7 17 ♜c2 ♙f5! (provoking e4 to block out the g2-bishop and give Black some useful squares on the queenside) 18 e4 ♙g4 19 ♜dc1 ♜ed8! 20 ♙c3 c6 21 h3 ♙xc3 22 ♜xc3 ♙e6 23 a3 a4! (providing an anchor for the bishop on b3) 24 h4 ♙b3 25 ♜e1 c5! (this game is another example of the benefits of the

queenside majority when White no longer has central domination; the main benefit of having the potential passed pawn on the queenside is that whereas Black can 'push for a passer' at little risk, White has to expose his king to do likewise) 26 e5 ♖d4 (a tangible reward for Black's seventeenth move) 27 ♖ac1 ♖c8 28 h5 b6! (impressively solid; Black's patience is soon rewarded by White's impatience) 29 hxg6 hxg6 30 e6? (it is difficult to suggest a good plan for White since Black is in total control and was threatening to infiltrate slowly on the d-file; still, White could have tried to hold the position together with ♖e3 and maybe ♖f3 and ♖g2) 30...♙xe6 31 ♖h3 ♖d6 32 ♙xe6 ♖xe6 33 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 34 ♖e1 ♖d6 35 ♖e4 ♖d8 36 ♖h2 b5 37 ♖h4 f6 38 ♖e3 g5 39 ♖e4 ♖f7 40 ♖f3 ♖d1! (Howell displays excellent technique: carefully preventing counterplay but confidently transforming his advantage) 41 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 42 ♖e2 g4! (gaining space and fixing the white pawns) 43 ♖g2 ♖d3 44 ♖f1 ♖d1+ 45 ♖g2 ♖d3 46 ♖f1 ♖g6 47 ♖e1 ♖f5 48 ♖e8 c4 49 ♖e7 ♖b3 50 ♖e2 b4! 51 axb4 c3! 0-1. A pleasing finale. If White takes on a3 Black exchanges rooks and queens the a-pawn.

11 h3!?

I guess White was concerned about the idea of ...♙e6, ...♖c8 and ...♙h3. There are many other moves in this position, but none of them significantly alter the character of the position.

11...a5!

Gaining space and planning to probe the white queenside at a later stage.

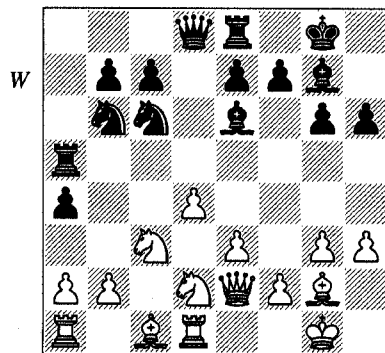
12 ♖e2 a4!?

Black's play is very patient and creative; soon we will see another idea behind the advance of this a-pawn.

13 ♖d1 ♙e6! 14 ♖d2

14 d5 ♖xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 16 e4 ♙c4! wins for Black.

14...♖a5! (D)



An impressive conception. Black is optimizing every single piece in preparation for the central break.

15 ♖de4 ♖c8!

Ducking the concealed challenge of White's d1-rook and gaining an important tempo.

16 ♖h2 ♙c4! 17 ♖c2 e5!!

These exclamation marks are in honour of the timing, which is absolutely perfect. Black is fully mobilized, and White is in disarray.

18 dxe5 ♖b4! 19 ♖d2 ♖axe5!

Centralization!

20 f4 ♖5e7 21 ♖c5 ♖xe3!

A winning combination, which had to be carefully calculated.

22 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 23 ♙xe3 ♖c2 24 ♖xb7 ♖d7! 25 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 26 ♖d1

♖e6 27 ♙f2 ♙xc3! 28 bxc3 ♖e2 29 ♖d8+ ♖h7 30 ♖g1 ♖e1 31 ♖c5 ♖f3+ 0-1

A powerful display by Kožul, and a good advert for Black's chances in this line.

Game 36

Speelman – Nunn

London 1986

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 g6 3 g3 ♙g7 4 ♙g2 0-0

Or 4...d5 5 0-0 (5 c4 dxc4!) 5...0-0 6 c4 dxc4.

5 0-0 d5 6 c4 dxc4!?

6...♖c6!? is also playable here, but then you have to be equipped for 7 cxd5 ♖xd5 8 ♖c3 ♖b6 9 d5.

Bearing in mind the lines I have recommended, I should also mention that it is important to take on c4 before castling to prevent this line. This will almost always transpose, and there is nothing to be feared by an early ♖a4+, against which Black should play ...♖fd7, etc.

7 ♖a3

This is by far the most common move.

7 ♖a4 ♖c6 8 ♖xc4 ♖d7 will give Black a very comfortable position, not dissimilar to those we are about to consider.

7...♖c6!?

I am recommending this solid move, which I find much easier to understand than 7...c3 8 bxc3 c5. I have always felt this is a favourable version of the variations where White combines ♖c3 with g3. We have the same

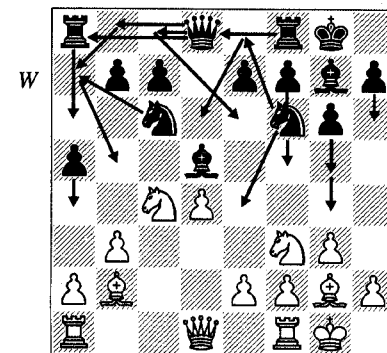
structure but White's space advantage is more significant since Black has to find room for another minor piece.

7...♖a6 8 ♖xc4 c5 gives Black good chances of equalizing but leads to much less engaging positions than those we consider in the main game.

8 ♖xc4 ♙e6 9 b3 ♙d5

9...♖c8!?

10 ♙b2 a5 (D)



This is the generic position for this line. White has a space advantage and Black will find it difficult to engineer pawn-breaks to fight against the d4 point. However, Black has a strong grip on the central light squares and all of Black's pieces are reasonably content. The rook on f8 hopes to come to d8 (when the queen finds a role) or maybe stay where it is if ...f5 is appropriate. The queen often goes to e6 via c8 or a7 via b8. The a8-rook has its hands full supporting the a-pawn, but has been known to find time to come to a6 and have a look around. In doing so, a8 can be used by the queen to add further support to the ...a5-a4 push and

Korchnoi once played ...♖a6 followed by ...♗a7-b5, which was a good laugh if nothing else. ...♗f6-d6 is not uncommon and this knight can also come to e4 to have a little taste of White's territory. Moreover, ...h6 is usually a useful move, particularly in conjunction with pushing the g-pawn to g4 to fight for light squares or playing ...f5 to gain further control of the centre.

So, hopefully you won't run out of ideas! One of the biggest problems in such positions is playing without purpose. This is easy to do when you don't have the liberating pawn-breaks that you normally do in the Grünfeld. You will have noticed that almost all the above-mentioned manoeuvres take place within Black's half of the board and you may well wonder what White will be doing in the meantime. Normally White plays e3 followed by ♖e2 and puts the rooks on d1 and c1. Sometimes White decides to hold off Black's queenside play with a2-a4 or a2-a3, which discourages ...a4 due to the reply b4. Black should be particularly alert to White moving a knight to e5, which can be quite disruptive if Black gets a little over-zealous in his manoeuvring ideas. That said, it is important to realize that if Black lets White take on c6 and recaptures with the b-pawn, the open lines on the queenside tend to compensate fully for the structural damage. Black should also be attentive to the idea of ♗c4-e3, which can force the bishop to go to a somewhat less stable square on e4.

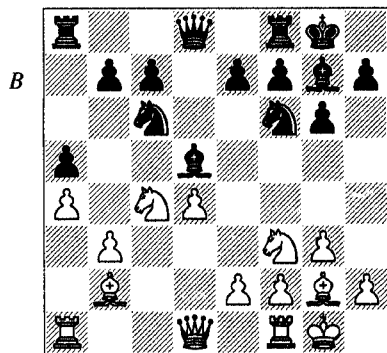
Although this line does require rather a lot of patience, things do come

to a head eventually, and then the side that has manoeuvred more purposefully will tend to come off best. I hope you won't feel mesmerized by the number of games I have added, it's just that it's the type of line where playing over games is the best way to get a feeling for the positional nuances.

11 ♖c1!?

This is a perfectly natural move, but at the time of writing, it is more fashionable for White to hold back the black a-pawn:

a) 11 a4!?! (D) and now:



a1) 11...e6 12 ♖c1 ♖a6 13 e3 ♗b8 14 ♗a3 ♗d8 15 ♗e1 ♖a8 16 ♗f1 b6 17 ♗e2 ♗b4 18 ♗fe5 c5 19 dxc5 bxc5 1/2-1/2 Spassky-Bronstein, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1963 is a good example of how this line has been played at the highest level but to my mind Black's play in the following game was more thematic:

a2) 11...♗c8 12 e3 ♗d8 13 ♖e2 h6 14 ♗fd1 ♖e6 15 ♖ac1 ♗h7 16 ♗e1 ♗xg2 17 ♗xg2 ♗g5 18 h4 ♗e4 19

♗f4 ♖f5 20 ♖f3 h5 21 ♗g2 ♗d7 22 ♗d3 e6 23 ♖xf5 exf5 24 f3 ♗d6 25 ♗de5 ♗xc4 26 ♗xc4 ♗b4 27 ♗c3 ♗d5 and now Black had a very comfortable endgame in Mojzsis-Kleberc, Czech Cht 1998. Note that there is no rush for the c6-knight to jump to b4; this square will be available for a long time and it is also important to keep the e5-square covered.

Other instructive examples include:

b) 11 ♗e3!?! ♗e4 12 ♗e5 ♗xg2 13 ♗xg2 ♗d5! 14 ♖c1 ♗xe3+ 15 ♖xe3 ♗xe5 16 dxe5 ♗d5+ 17 ♖f3 ♗fd8 P.Nikolić-Popović, Vršac 1981. I prefer Black here, although GM Nikolić has shown himself to be quite partial to these structures for White.

c) 11 ♗fe5 ♗xg2 12 ♗xg2 a4!?! 13 f3 ♗a5 14 e4 ♗d7 15 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 16 ♗c4 ♖a6 17 b4 ♗b6 18 ♗a3 e6 19 ♖e2 ♖e7 20 ♗c3 ♗d8 21 ♗fd1 ♗d7 22 ♗d3 ♖a8 23 ♗ad1 ♗ad8 24 ♖e3 ♖e8 25 ♖g5 h6 26 ♖e3 ♖e7 27 ♗e1 ♗d6 28 ♖g1 ♗d7 29 ♗f2 ♖e8 30 ♗e3 ♗d6 31 ♖f2 ♗d6 32 ♖b2 f5 33 ♖e2 g5 34 ♗f2 fxe4 35 fxe4 ♖g6. All the heavy manoeuvring has left Black with the more comfortable position. In the game Mikhalevski-Dvoirys, Beer-sheba 1997, Black went on to win an instructive bishop endgame fifty-two moves later.

11...♗c8

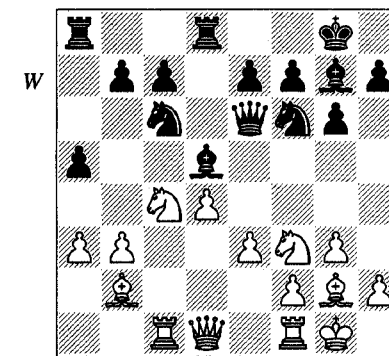
As far as I can tell, it is better not to wear out the black a-pawn. I prefer to keep the tension in Black's position. That said, there are many alternatives here:

a) 11...♖a6 12 a3 ♗a7 (I suspect that this is a little too adventurous; at

any rate, White's reaction is very convincing) 13 e3 ♗b5 14 a4 ♗d6 15 ♖e2 c6 16 ♗fd1 ♖c8 17 ♗a3 ♖e6 18 ♗fe5 ♗xg2 19 ♗xg2 ♗h6 20 ♗d3 ♗d7 21 ♖f3 ♖aa8 22 ♗f4 ♖f6 23 d5 ♗xc4 24 bxc4 c5 25 ♖e4. Black has been outplayed and is now worse, but nonetheless he forced White's resignation in just 39 moves in Van der Sterren-Korchnoi, Antwerp 1997.

b) 11...a4!?! is actually the main line, but again I would advise keeping this move on the back-burner.

12 a3 ♗d8 13 e3 ♖e6 (D)



14 ♖c2

Or:

a) 14 ♗g5?! ♖f5 (or 14...♖g4) doesn't get White anywhere.

b) 14 ♖e2 h6 15 ♗fd1 ♗e8!?! (covering e5 and heading for d6) 16 ♗e1 (16 ♗f1!?! is less cooperative, but Black still has control of the game) 16...♗xg2 17 ♗xg2 g5! (preventing ♗f4 and preparing to grip some light squares with ...g4) 18 ♖f3 ♗f6! (the position has changed – the knight is again useful on the kingside) 19 ♗c1

♖e4 20 ♘d3 g4! 21 ♗e2 ♗f5 22 ♘f4
 ♘g5 23 ♘d2 e5! 24 ♜c5 ♙f8 25 ♜b5
 ♗c2! (this is invasive, and worse, it's
 impolite) 26 ♘c4 ♘f3+ 27 ♖f1 ♗e4!
 28 ♗d3 ♘xh2+ 29 ♖e1 ♘f3+ 30 ♖e2
 ♘cx4+ (crunch!) 0-1 Dokuchaev-
 Lukin, Russian Cht (Kazan) 1995 – a
 model game and a powerful interpreta-
 tion of Black's position. White didn't
 seem to do much wrong, but was
 crushed nonetheless.

14...♖e4!?

This is not the only way to play
 Black's position, but Nunn's follow-
 up is worth seeing, because it leaves
 White with little to do.

15 ♜f1 f5 16 ♜e2 ♗f7 1/2-1/2

Black is now well coordinated and
 it is fully possible to play on by gradu-
 ally pushing the kingside pawns.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered three dif-
 ferent ways for White to play the
 fianchetto system and I have recom-
 mended three different responses:

- 1) Capture on d5 and play e4;
 break with ...e5 followed by ...c6.
- 2) Capture on d5 in conjunction
 with ♘f3; delay castling and be pa-
 tient with ...e5.
- 3) Allow Black to capture on c4;
 play ...♘c6 and ...♙e6-d5 and ma-
 noeuvre purposefully.

Afterthoughts

"Only one man understood me, and he didn't understand me." – Hegel (on his death bed)

I should say that I don't understand him, but that seems quite reasonable in the
 circumstances. At any rate, I wanted to close the book on a thought-provoking note
 rather than a hard-edged move or comment, which I always found a little imper-
 sonal.

Hopefully, you have found some value in this book and feel that you are now
 more closely acquainted with the Grünfeld. If you are not the type who reads
 from start to finish, then I trust you will find it a good research base. In closing, I
 wonder if I have answered the question set in the first chapter.

Not fully, I suspect, but on reading the following in Robert Pirsig's fantasti-
 cally challenging book, *LILA*, I realized that this aim was largely unachievable in
 any case:

"Different metaphysical ways of dividing up reality have, over the centuries,
 tended to fan out into a structure that resembles a book on chess openings. If you
 say that the world is 'one', then somebody can ask, 'Then why does it look like
 more than one?' And if you answer that it is due to faulty perception, he can ask,
 'How do you know which perception is faulty and which is real?'. Then you have
 to answer that, and so on.

"Trying to create a perfect metaphysics is like trying to create a perfect chess
 strategy, one that will win every time. You can't do it. It's out of the range of hu-
 man capability. No matter what position you take on a metaphysical question,
 someone will always start asking questions that will lead to more positions that
 lead to more questions in this endless intellectual chess game. The game is sup-
 posed to stop when it is agreed that a particular line of reasoning is illogical. This
 is supposed to be similar to checkmate. But conflicting positions go on for centu-
 ries without any such checkmate being agreed upon..."

All you can do is play the moves which you think are best. It is healthy to ap-
 preciate that your 'best' will never be conclusive.

Summary of Recommended Repertoire

The following is, I hope, a user-friendly supplement to the index.

Having advised the reader not to stick too tightly to any particular lines, this small section should be considered only as a minimalist guide for pilgrims. The journey is yours. It is good to wonder and wander. My role is to remind you of the path.

A) Exchange variations

After 4 cxd5 ♟xd5 5 e4 ♟xc3 6 bxc3, 6...♟g7 is the tidiest move-order. Then there are four main continuations:

7 ♟c4 (Classical main line) 7...c5 8 ♟e2 ♟c6 9 ♟e3 0-0 10 0-0 ♟g4! 11 f3 ♟a5! – see Chapter 6.

7 ♟b5+ ♟d7!? – see Chapter 8 and Game 4.

7 ♟e3 c5 8 ♟d2 ♟a5! – see Games 5 and 18, but check the index for other related references to ♟e3.

7 ♟f3 c5 8 ♟b1. I suggest following the critical path currently tread by the world's best: 8...0-0 9 ♟e2 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♟a5+ 11 ♟d2 ♟xa2 12 0-0 ♟g4! – see Chapter 9.

B) Systems with ♟b3

4 ♟f3 ♟g7 5 ♟b3; I argue that 5...dxc4 6 ♟xc4 0-0 7 e4 ♟c6!? is under-rated. See Chapter 12.

C) Systems with ♟f4

4 ♟f4 ♟g7: 5 ♟c1 ♟h5!, 5 e3 c5! and 5 ♟f3 0-0! are all discussed in Chapter 13.

D) Systems with ♟g5

Main lines with ...♟e4; see Chapters 10 and 11, especially Games 27 and 29.

E) g3 Lines

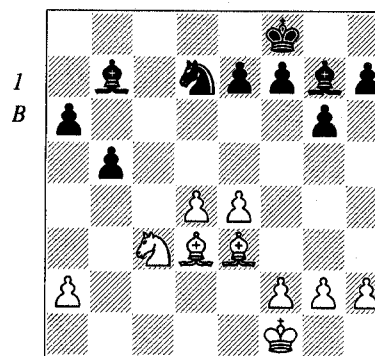
You'll probably be pleased to hear that I'm not recommending the turgid variations with ...c6 followed by ...d5. All g3 lines are discussed in Chapter 14.

F) Side-steps

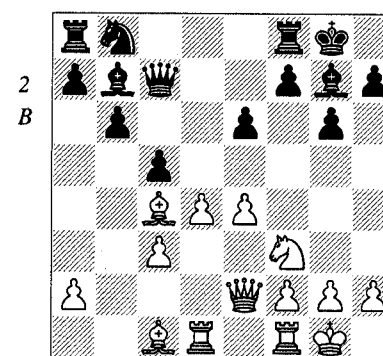
Chapter 4 includes my recommendations against the infamous 4 cxd5 5 ♟xd5 5 ♟a4!? – see Game 12, together with 3 f3!? (Game 10) and 4 cxd5 ♟xd5 5 ♟d2!? (Game 11).

Grünfeld Quiz

I think we all have a tendency to misassess the extent of our knowledge and abilities. Whether you want to do the following tests before, during, or after reading the book is entirely your own choice, but in any case it seems to me that the following ten positions should give you at least some insight into your understanding of the opening. In the solutions (on pages 234-6) I refer to relevant back-up material from the book, which may help you to bridge any gaps that you have suddenly noticed in your understanding.



Rowson – Gormally
London 1997

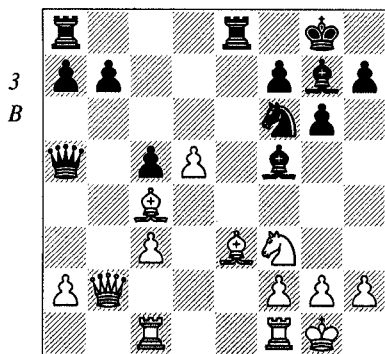


S. Ivanov – V. Mikhalevski
Beersheba 1998

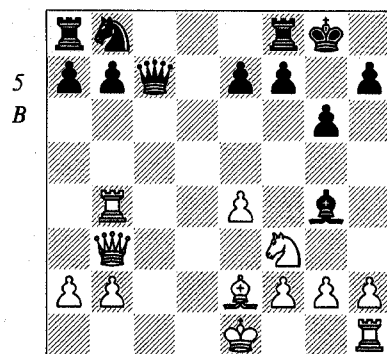
What is your evaluation of the position? Black now played 25...♟e8. What do you think White played now? How should Black have prevented this?

White's last move was 13 ♟a3-c1. What are White's two most dangerous ideas in this position?

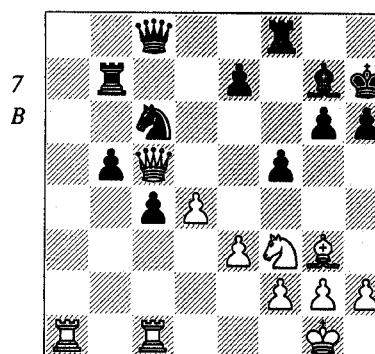
Black played 13...♟c8. Why was this a mistake? What should Black have played?



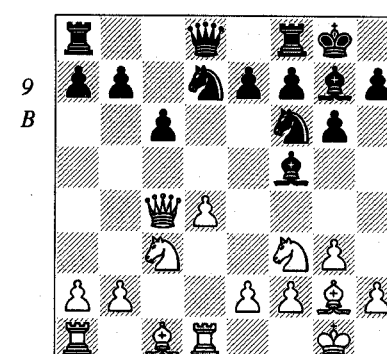
Piket – Korchnoi
Wijk aan Zee 1990



Nadanian – Malishauskas
Minsk 1997



Douven – Ghinda
Hamburg 1984



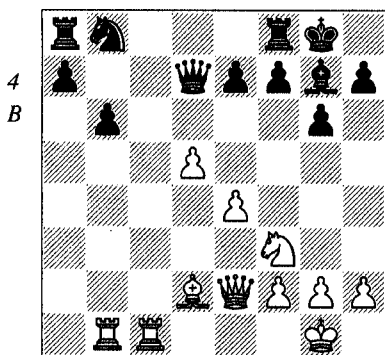
Stohl – Krasenkow
Bundesliga 1997

How do you evaluate the position? What is the best way for Black to deal with the threat to the b-pawn?

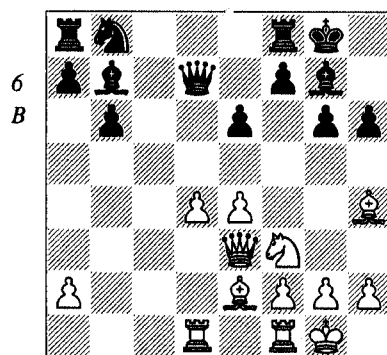
Black's b-pawn is under attack, but White's king looks a little uncomfortable. 15...♖c1+, 15...b6 and 15...♘c6 are the main choices; which should Black choose?

Although Black seems to be a secure pawn up, White is well coordinated and threatens some serious annoyance with ♖a6. What should Black do about this? (Are you sure?)

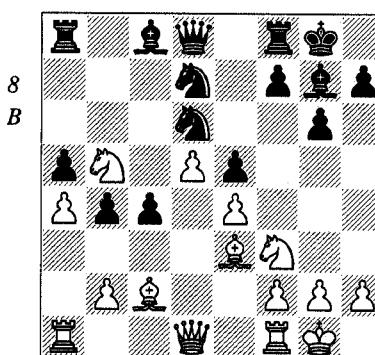
White seems to have a harmonious position and good prospects of generating some initiative with ideas like ♖b3, ♘h4, ♗g5, ♘e5, etc. How did Black take control of the game?



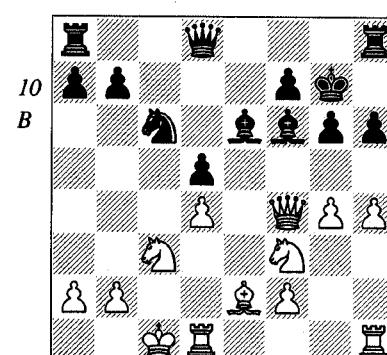
Komarov – Karasev
Leningrad 1989



Gelfand – Tsherkovsky
Yugoslavia 1997



Anton – Nesis
World Corr. Cup Final 1978-80



Kopsa – Holmsten
Kuopio Kalakukko 1993

Who is better? Black played 18...a5 with the idea 19 ♖xb6 a4 20 ♗c3 ♖c8!. Is this tactically/strategically sound? What should White's 19th move be? Did Black have a better 18th move?

What is the best way for Black to complete his development?

What is best thing about the black position? How might White intend to undermine this feature? What should Black do about it?

Which variation do you think gave rise to this position? Who is better, and why? What would you recommend for Black here?

Solutions

1) The position is approximately equal. Black's sturdy queenside formation makes it difficult for White to do anything constructive. White does have chances to play on both sides of the board however, and the extra space makes White's position somewhat easier to play. This was borne out by the game continuation:

25...♟e8?!

Not the most accurate move, because it gives White a chance to increase his space advantage. 25...h5! was better. Then White might try to improve the knight with 26 ♘b1!? intending ♘d2-b3, targeting the queenside and overprotecting d4, but Black has no real targets to attack.

26 g4! e5? 27 d5 ♟f8 28 g5! ♟c5 29 ♟d2! ♟e7 30 ♟e2 ♘b6 31 ♘d1! ♟c8?! 32 ♟a5! ♟g4+ 33 f3 ♟d7 34 ♘e3 ♟d6 35 ♘c2 ♟c8 36 ♟e1! ♘a4 37 ♘b4 ♟d4 38 ♟c2! ♟d7 39 ♟xa4 bxa4 40 ♘d3! ♟b5 41 ♟b4+ ♟d7 42 ♟d2 ♟xd3 43 ♟xd3 ♟g1 44 h3 ♟b6 45 ♟d2 ♟d8 46 ♟c4 ♟e7 47 ♟c3 1-0

(See Chapter 7, especially Game 19.)

2) White threatens not only to thrust Delroy into the heart of Black's position, but to soften up Black's kingside with h4-h5. Black needs to create counterplay quickly and the best way to do this seems to be 13...♘c6.

S.Ivanov then gives 14 ♟e3 ♟ac8 15 d5 exd5 16 exd5 ♘e5, when Black is presumably doing quite well. 13...♘d7 also appears playable, when Black threatens to take on d4 and then e4.

13...♟c8?

I hope Chapter 3 convinced you that you have to be a little more attentive to Delroy's intentions.

14 d5!

Of course!

14...exd5 15 exd5 ♘d6 16 ♘g5! h6 17 ♘xf7! ♟xf7 18 ♟f4! ♘d7 19 d6+ ♟f8 20 ♟fe1 ♟e8 21 ♘xe8+ ♘xe8

White now played 22 ♟xe8+ and won twenty moves later, but 22 d7! would have been much more elegant: 22...♘xd7 (22...♘xd7 23 ♟xd7 ♘xd7 24 ♟d6#) 23 ♟d6+ ♘e7 24 ♟xe7 +-.

(See Chapter 3 generally, and look at Games 16 and 21.)

3) Black has some advantage since White's forces are uncoordinated and Delroy is more of a weakness than a strength. However, the passive 16...b6 would leave Black's queen stranded and the position would become unclear. Korchnoi played more powerfully:

16...♘b6! 17 ♘a3

17 ♘xb6 axb6 is slightly better for Black according to Korchnoi. The black rook suddenly has lots of possibilities on the a-file and it's difficult

for White to attack b6 because Black controls b1.

17...♟f8 18 ♟cd1 ♟d6 19 h3 a6 20 ♟h6 ♘c7 21 ♘c1 ♘d7 22 ♟f4 ♟e4 23 ♘g5 b5 24 ♟xd6 ♘xd6 25 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 26 ♟d3 c4 27 ♟xe4 ♟xe4

Black was now firmly in control and went on to win. (See Chapter 3, especially Game 5.)

4) The position is unclear. Black's position is very compact but I think White has full compensation for the pawn because all of his pieces are actively placed, while Black has some difficulties developing and Black's kingside is somewhat vulnerable (it is not difficult for White to exchange off the only kingside defender with ♟c3).

18...a5?!

The given variation does hold together tactically but from a strategic point of view this move is much too ambitious. 18...♘b7!? intending either ...♘a6 or ...♘d7 leads to a tense position where White has lots of ways to proceed but Black looks solid.

19 ♟c3!

Ignoring the bait and suddenly reminding Black that his king is rather lonely. There follows a classic demonstration of the maxim that the player who controls the centre, controls the game.

19...♟xc3 20 ♟xc3 a4 21 ♘e3! ♟c8 22 ♘h6! f6 23 ♟xc8+ ♘xc8 24 ♘d4 ♘f8 25 ♘c1 ♟e8 26 ♘e6 ♘a6 27 ♟xb6 a3 28 ♘h6 ♘f7 29 ♘c1 ♟e8 30 ♟b1! ♟b8 31 ♟a1 ♘a4? 32 ♘h6 ♟f7 33 ♘xh7+ ♟e8 34 ♘g8+ ♟d7 35 ♘xb8 1-0

(See Chapter 9, especially pages 109-14.)

5) 15...♘c6!

Developing with tempo and refusing to allow White to settle down.

After 15...b6?! 16 0-0, White's extra space and development grant him a slight advantage.

15...♘c1+ is not so bad for Black but the queen looks a little lonely and her lack of support means that this excursion is unproblematic for White. 16 ♘d1 looks best, when White seems to have a small advantage, for example 16...♘f4 17 ♘d2!.

16 ♘c3

After 16 ♟xb7, 16...♘c8! intending ...♘a5 is winning for Black, but 16...♘a5+ 17 ♘c3 is much less clear.

16...♟ac8 17 ♟c4 ♘b6 18 0-0 ♟fd8

Black now had a clear advantage and went on to create his very own Delroy, which left White in disarray:

19 ♟d1 ♟xd1+ 20 ♟xd1 ♟d8 21 ♟e2 e5 22 h3 ♘d4! 23 ♘xd4 exd4 24 ♘d2 ♟xe2 25 ♘xe2 ♘a5! 26 ♘d1 d3 27 a4 d2 28 b4 ♘e5 29 b5 ♘e6 30 ♟b4 ♘a2 31 ♟h2 ♘a3 32 ♟c4 ♘d3 0-1

(Perhaps look again at Chapter 2.)

6) 15...♘a4!

The queen laterally attacks the white centre and makes way for the knight to come to d7. 15...♘c6 16 d5! is unpleasant for Black.

16 ♟d2 ♘d7 17 ♟d1?! ♘a5 18 ♟b3 ♟ac8 19 ♟fd1

Both sides are mobilized but Black's forces are more purposefully placed.

19...g5! 20 ♖g3 ♜f6 21 d5

21 e5 ♜d5 gives Black total control of the game. This explains White's decision to sacrifice material.

21...exd5 22 e5 ♜fe8 23 h3 ♜c3 24 ♜d3 ♜e4 25 ♜h2 ♜xd3 26 ♜xd3 ♜c5 27 ♜f5

Black is now clearly better and went on to win a fine game. (See Chapter 8, and Game 16.)

7) 25...♜xd4! 26 exd4

Or 26 ♜xc8 ♜xf3+ 27 gxf3 ♜xc8. 26...♜xc5 27 dxc5 ♖xa1 0-1

Many of you will have seen this far, but the combination is only completely convincing when you see 28 ♖xa1 f4 winning a piece. (Just a general Grünfeld tactic!)

8) 16...♜b6!

The pawns on b4 and c4 (especially) are Black's main assets and give him good prospects on the queenside. However, this duo could quickly come under heavy fire after ♜d2 and ♜e2. In his notes to this game, Nesis emphasizes that all of Black's prospects are connected to maintaining the pawn on c4. Thus 16...♜xb5 17 axb5 ♜b6 18 ♜d2 would be better for White. The game continued:

17 ♜e2 ♖a6! 18 ♜d2 ♖xb5! 19 axb5 ♜c8!

Black is very persistent in his aim.

20 ♜xa5 ♜xd5 21 ♜a4 ♜xe3 22 fx3 b3 23 ♖b1 ♜b6 24 ♜a6 ♜c5 25 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 26 ♜xc4 ♜c5

Black is clearly better and went on to win. (See Chapter 3 generally, and particularly note 'a2' on page 175.)

9) 10...♖c2!

An important move, which disrupts White's coordination and allows Black to gain a firm grip on the central squares. Other lines seem to give White a slight edge, e.g. 10...♜b6 11 ♜b3 ♖e6 12 ♜c2 ♖f5 13 e4 ♖g4 14 b3 ±.

11 ♜e1

11 ♜d2 is very awkward: after 11...♜b6 12 ♜c5 ♜e4 Black is at least slightly better.

11...♜b6 12 ♜c5 ♜e4! 13 ♜xe4 ♖xe4 14 ♜d1 ♜e8!? 15 ♖f4 ♜d5 16 ♜e5 ♖xg2 17 ♜xg2 ♜xf4+ 18 gxf4 e6

The minor-piece exchanges have left Black without any spatial difficulties. Black's bishop has better long-term prospects than the knight and White's king is a little draughty. White resigned on move 41. (Chapter 14, especially Game 36.)

10) Those who paid close attention to Chapter 11 will realize that this position arose from note 'b' to White's 8th move in Game 29. Black is better because of the two bishops, and the possibility of immediately neutralizing White's attacking plans on the kingside.

17...♜b8! 18 ♜d2

The queen exchange would give Black a clear endgame advantage; White has to worry about the weaknesses on the kingside and d4.

18...♜d6 19 g5 hxg5 20 hxg5 ♖e7 21 ♜h4 ♜h7! 22 ♜f3 ♜ah8 23 ♜hg1 a6!?

Black has complete control and went on to win. (See pages 157-9.)

Index of Variations

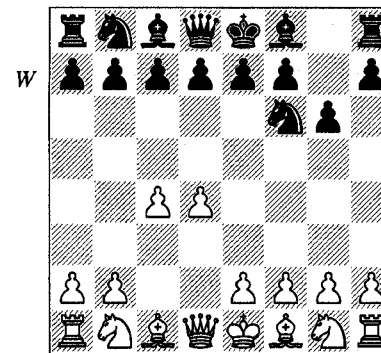
Page references and cross-references are shown in *italic*.

1 d4 ♜f6

2 c4

2 ♜f3 g6 3 g3 (3 c4 - 2 c4 g6 3 ♜f3) 3...♖g7 4 ♖g2 d5 5 0-0 (or 5 c4 dxc4 6 0-0 0-0) 5...0-0 6 c4 dxc4 - 2 c4 g6 3 ♜f3 ♖g7 4 g3 d5 5 ♖g2 dxc4 6 0-0 0-0

2 ... g6 (D)



Now:

A: Without 3 ♜c3

B: 3 ♜c3 d5 without 4 ♜f3 or 4 cxd5

C: 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜f3

D: 3 ♜c3 d5 4 cxd5

A)

3 ♜f3

3 f3 d5 4 cxd5 ♜xd5 5 e4 ♜b6 6 ♜c3 ♖g7 7 ♖e3 0-0 8 ♜d2 (8 f4 - 4 cxd5 ♜xd5 5 ♖d2 ♖g7 6 e4 ♜b6 7

♖e3 0-0 8 f4) 8...♜c6 (8...e5 48) 9 0-0-0 (9 ♜d1 48): 9...e5 49; 9...f5 50

3 g3 ♖g7 (3...d5 213; 3...c5 213) 4 ♖g2 d5 5 cxd5 ♜xd5:

a) 6 ♜f3 - 3 ♜f3 ♖g7 4 g3 d5 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 ♖g2

b) 6 ♜c3 ♜xc3 7 bxc3 c5 213

c) 6 e4 ♜b6 7 ♜e2 c5 216

3 ... ♖g7

3...d5?! 63

4 g3

4 ♜c3 d5 - 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜f3 ♖g7

4 ♖f4 0-0 5 ♜c3 d5 (5...c5 15) - 4 ♜f3 ♖g7 5 ♖f4

4 ... d5

Now:

a) 5 ♖g2 dxc4 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♜a3 (7 ♜a4 225) 7...♜c6 (7...c3 225) 8 ♜xc4 ♖e6 225

b) 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 ♖g2 ♜b6 (6...0-0 220) 7 ♜c3 (7 a4 220) 7...♜c6 8 e3 (8 0-0 ♜xd4 220) 8...0-0 221

B)

3 ♜c3 d5

4 ♖f4

Or:

a) 4 ♜a4+ 64

b) 4 h4 c5 64

c) 4 g4 dxc4 64

d) 4 f3 c5 63

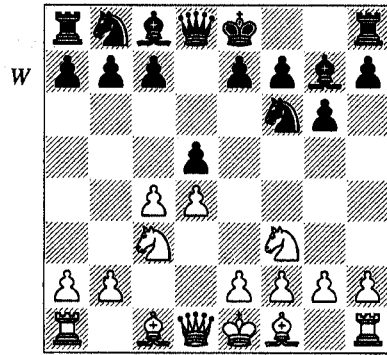
e) 4 e3 ♖g7 5 ♜b3 (5 ♜f3 - 4 ♜f3 ♖g7 5 e3) 5...e6 6 ♜a3 162

f) 4 ♖b3 dxc4 5 ♜xc4 ♙g7:
 f1) 6 ♙f4 c6 7 ♜f3 (7 ♞d1 166)
 7...0-0 167
 f2) 6 e4 0-0 7 ♙f4 (7 ♜f3 - 4 ♜f3
 ♙g7 5 ♖b3 dxc4 6 ♜xc4 0-0 7 e4)
 7...♜c6 167
 g) 4 ♙g5 ♜e4 5 ♙f4 (5 ♜xe4?! 40;
 5 cxd5 40; 5 ♙h4 40) 5...♜xc3 6 bxc3
 ♙g7 (6...dxc4 7 e4 40) 7 e3 c5 (7...0-0
 8 cxd5 ♜xd5 9 ♖b3 138) and now:
 g1) 8 cxd5 cxd4 (8...♜xd5 139) 9
 cxd4 ♜xd5 10 ♜f3 0-0 - 8 ♜f3 0-0 9
 cxd5 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♜xd5
 g2) 8 ♜f3:
 g21) 8...♜c6 9 cxd5 (9 ♞b1 cxd4 10
 cxd4 0-0 133) 9...♜xd5 10 ♙e2 cxd4
 11 cxd4 0-0 - 8...0-0 9 cxd5 cxd4 10
 cxd4 ♜xd5 11 ♙e2 ♜c6
 g22) 8...0-0 9 cxd5 (9 ♞b1 cxd4 10
 cxd4 ♜c6 133; 9 ♙e2 139) 9...cxd4 10
 cxd4 ♜xd5 11 ♙e2 ♜c6 12 0-0:
 12...b6?! 133; 12...♙f5 139
 4 ... ♙g7
 5 e3
 5 ♜f3 - 4 ♜f3 ♙g7 5 ♙f4
 5 ♞c1 ♜h5 186
 5 ... c5
 6 dxc5 ♜a5
 7 ♜f3
 7 cxd5 ♜xd5 196
 7 ♖b3 ♙d7 196
 7 ♜a4+ ♜xa4 8 ♜xa4 ♙d7 9 ♜c3
 ♜e4 194
 7 ♞c1 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 0-0 (8...♜xc5?
 191):
 a) 9 ♜f3 - 7 ♜f3 0-0 8 ♞c1 dxc4 9
 ♙xc4
 b) 9 ♜e2 191
 7 ... 0-0
 7...♜e4 191
 8 ♞c1 dxc4

8...♜e4 196
 9 ♙xc4 ♜xc5
 10 ♙b3
 10 ♖b3 197
 10 ... ♜a5
 11 0-0 ♜c6 198

C)

3 ♜c3 d5
 4 ♜f3 ♙g7 (D)



5 ♖b3

Or:

a) 5 e3 0-0 6 ♖b3 (6 cxd5 163; 6
 ♙e2 c5 163; 6 ♙d2 c5 163; 6 b4 b6
 163) 6...e6 163
 b) 5 ♜a4+ ♙d7 6 ♖b3 dxc4 7 ♜xc4
 0-0 8 e4 b5 18
 c) 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 e4 (6 ♖b3 64; 6
 ♜a4+ 64) 6...♜xc3 7 bxc3 - 4 cxd5
 ♜xd5 5 e4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♜f3
 d) 5 ♙f4 0-0 and now:
 d1) 6 cxd5 205
 d2) 6 e3 c5 7 dxc5 ♜a5 - 4 ♙f4 ♙g7
 5 e3 c5 6 dxc5 ♜a5 7 ♜f3 0-0
 d3) 6 ♖b3 c6 (6...dxc4 7 ♜xc4 c6 -
 4 ♖b3 dxc4 5 ♜xc4 ♙g7 6 ♙f4 c6 7
 ♜f3 0-0) 7 ♞d1 dxc4 8 ♜xc4 16

d4) 6 ♞c1 dxc4 (6...♜h5?! 205) 7 e4
 (7 e3 ♙e6 205) 7...♙g4 206
 e) 5 ♙g5 ♜e4 (5...c5 152; 5...dxc4
 153) 6 cxd5 (6 ♙f4 ♜xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8
 e3 - 4 ♙g5 ♜e4 5 ♙f4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3
 ♙g7 7 e3 c5 8 ♜f3; 6 ♙h4 ♜xc3 7
 bxc3 dxc4 153; 6 ♞c1 155) 6...♜xg5
 7 ♜xg5 e6:
 e1) 8 ♜a4+ 155
 e2) 8 ♜d2 exd5 9 ♜e3+ ♜f8 10 ♜f4
 157
 e3) 8 ♜f3 exd5 9 e3 (9 b4 159)
 9...0-0 (9...a5 10 ♙e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♞e8
 12 a3 ♙f8 160) 10 b4 (10 ♙e2 ♞e8 11
 0-0 150) 10...c6 11 ♞c1 (11 ♙e2 161)
 11...a6 161
 5 ... dxc4
 6 ♜xc4 0-0
 7 e4
 7 ♙f4 c6 - 4 ♖b3 dxc4 5 ♜xc4 0-0 6
 ♙f4 c6 7 ♜f3
 7 ... ♜c6
 7...a6 168
 7...♜a6 168
 7...c6 169
 7...♙g4 169
 8 ♙e2
 8 d5 170
 8 e5 171
 8 h3 ♜d7 173
 8 ♙e3 ♜g4 174
 8 ♙g5 174
 8 ♙f4 ♜h5 9 ♙e3 ♙g4 171
 Now (after 8 ♙e2):
 8...♙g4 174; 8...♜d7 179

D)

3 ♜c3 d5
 4 cxd5 ♜xd5
 5 e4
 5 ♖b3 64

5 ♜a4+ 64
 5 h4 c5 64
 5 g3 ♙g7 6 ♙g2 - 3 g3 ♙g7 4 ♙g2
 d5 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 ♜c3
 5 ♜f3 ♙g7 6 e4 (6 ♜a4 56) 6...♜xc3
 7 bxc3 - 5 e4 ♜xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♜f3
 5 ♙d2 ♙g7 6 e4 ♜b6 7 ♙e3 0-0 8
 ♙e2 (8 f4 52) 8...♜c6 52
 5 ♜a4 e5 (5...♙f5 57; 5...♜f6 57) 6
 dxe5 (6 e4 59) 6...♙b4+ 7 ♙d2 ♜e3
 59
 5 ... ♜xc3
 6 bxc3 ♙g7
 6...c5:
 a) 7 ♙b5+ ♙d7 8 ♙e2 (8 ♙xd7+
 ♜xd7 9 ♜f3 25) 8...♙g7 9 ♜f3 102
 b) 7 ♙e3 cxd4 (7...♙g7 - 6...♙g7 7
 ♙e3 c5) 8 cxd4 e5 90
 c) 7 ♜f3 ♙g7 - 6...♙g7
 Now (after 6...♙g7):
 D1: 7 ♙c4
 D2: 7 ♙e3
 D3: 7 ♜f3
 Others:
 7 ♜a4+ 101
 7 ♙a3 101
 7 ♙b5+ ♙d7 (7...c6 8 ♙a4 101) 8
 ♙e2 (8 ♙xd7+ ♜xd7 9 ♜f3 c5 25)
 8...c5 9 ♜f3 102
 D1)
 7 ♙e3 c5
 7...♙d7? 22
 8 ♜d2 ♜a5
 8...0-0: 9 ♞c1 33; 9 ♜f3 - 7 ♜f3 c5 8
 ♙e3 0-0 9 ♜d2
 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 ♜c6 10 ♞d1 ♜a5 96
 9 ♞b1
 9 ♜f3 - 7 ♜f3 c5 8 ♙e3 ♜a5 9 ♜d2
 9 ... b6

9...a6 29
 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖xd2+ 11 ♗xd2 29
 10 ♙b5+
 10 ♚b5 29
 10 ... ♙d7
 Now:
 11 ♙d3 29
 11 ♙e2: 11...0-0 31; 11...♙c6 31

D2)
 7 ♙c4 c5
 7...0-0:
 a) 8 ♙e3 ♗c6 (8...c5 - 7...c5) 9 ♗f3 43
 b) 8 ♗e2 ♗c6 (8...c5 - 7...c5) 9 0-0: 9...b6 43; 9...e5 43
 8 ♗e2 0-0
 8...♗c6 9 ♙e3 cxd4 (9...0-0 - 8...0-0) 10 cxd4 ♖a5+ 68
 9 0-0
 9 ♙e3 ♗c6 10 ♚c1 (10 0-0 - 9 0-0) 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♖a5+ 12 ♗f1 ♖a3 76
 9 ... ♗c6
 10 ♙e3 ♙g4
 10...♗a5 11 ♙d3 ♙g4 69
 10...♖c7 11 ♚c1 ♚d8 12 ♙f4 69
 11 f3 ♗a5
 12 ♙d3
 12 ♙d5 70
 12 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 13 fxg4 ♚xf1+ 14 ♗xf1 (14 ♖xf1 70) 14...cxd4 (14...♖d6 71) 15 cxd4 e5 72
 12 ... cxd4
 13 cxd4 ♙e6
 Now:
 14 ♖a4 a6 15 d5 ♙d7 16 ♖b4 b5 81
 14 d5 ♙xa1 15 ♖xa1 f6 78
 14 ♚c1 ♙xa2 15 ♖a4 (15 d5 82; 15

f4 82) 15...♙b3 82

D3)
 7 ♗f3 c5
 8 ♚b1
 8 ♙e2 ♗c6 107
 8 ♙b5+ ♙d7 (8...♗c6 25) 9 ♙xd7+ (9 ♙e2 - 7 ♙b5+ ♙d7 8 ♙e2 c5 9 ♗f3) 9...♖xd7 25
 8 ♙e3:
 a) 8...0-0 9 ♖d2 ♙g4 (9...♖a5 - 8...♖a5) 10 ♗g5 66
 b) 8...♖a5 9 ♖d2 0-0 10 ♚c1 (10 ♚b1 ♗c6 34) 10...cxd4 (10...♗d7 35) 11 cxd4 ♖xd2+ 12 ♗xd2 (12 ♗xd2 ♚d8 94) 12...e6 93
 8 ... 0-0
 9 ♙e2 cxd4
 9...b6 86
 9...♗c6 10 d5 ♗e5 (10...♙xc3+ 37) 11 ♗xe5 ♙xe5 12 ♖d2 37
 10 cxd4 ♖a5+
 11 ♙d2
 11 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 12 ♙xd2 98
 11 ... ♖xa2
 12 0-0 ♙g4
 12...b6 110
 12...♖e6 111
 12...♗d7 111
 12...♙d7 113
 12...♗a6 113
 12...a5 114
 Now (after 12...♙g4):
 13 ♚xb7 115
 13 d5 115
 13 ♙e3 ♗c6 122
 13 ♙g5 h6 (13...♖e6 115) 14 ♙h4 (14 ♙e3 ♗c6 116): 14...♚d8 127; 14...g5 127; 14...a5 127; 14...♖e6 128